

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/23/2020 8:36:22 PM

First name: Michael

Last name: Mucker

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have been mountain biking for over 30 years and have been involved with mountain bike advocacy and trail building and maintenance for over 20 years. I founded LHORBA (Laurel Highlands On and Off Road Cycling Association) in 1999 and was the president of the Pennsylvania club for the first 16 years of its existence. Over those years I have worked with land managers from three State Parks, two State Forests and a regional park and have helped design and build trails in all of those areas. I am still involved with LHORBA in the summer months. In Tucson I am on the board of SDMB (Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists). I serve on the advocacy and events committee and I am certified by the Pima County Trails Program as a trail crew leader. I am also an Arizona Trail Association member and volunteer.

I feel that the opinions voiced in this letter are shared by the vast majority of the numerous mountain bicyclists I interact with every year and especially those involved in advocacy. I have attended meetings on allowing E-Bike on non-motorized trails. I have found that those opposing the use of E-Bikes on these trails are long time trail builders, trail advocates, land managers and those with a vested interest in the trail systems. Those in favor are mostly retailers and bike shops who would benefit financially if E-Bikes are allowed on these trails.

I feel that the best policy for non-motorized trails is to not allow E-Bikes. Here are the reasons why:

Enforcement could be confusing and difficult: When most people talk about E-Bikes they are referring to ones that do not have a throttle, produce 750 watts or less, go no more than 20 mph and are less than 75 pounds. However these bikes are easily modified and the ones that do not fit those criteria cannot be distinguished from those that do. The ones with more than 750 watt look just like the ones with 750 or less. The ones that go over 20 mph look just like the ones that go less than that. The ones that require pedal assist look no different than ones with a throttle. And how do you know if it is more than 75 pounds? This is going to make enforcement of these stipulations impossible and could potentially allow fast moving, heavy, throttle activated electric motorized vehicles on the trails. It is simpler from an enforcement standpoint, as well as for the safety of all non-motorized trail users, to keep anything with any type of motor off of the trail.

Sharing the trail safely with other user groups: As an avid cyclist who has been involved in trail advocacy for over 20 years I feel that we should be good trail citizens and work with our fellow non-motorized user groups. Most hiking and equestrian groups oppose the use of E-Bikes on trails designated as non-motorized. I feel that all non-motorized bicycle users should follow suit. E-Bikes are much heavier than standard bicycles. Couple this with faster speeds and a potentially less experienced operator and it poses a safety threat to all other non-motorized users as well as to the operator of the E-Bike.

Bicyclists relationships with other user groups: I have spent much of my mountain bike advocacy time trying to convince equestrians, hikers and land managers that bicyclists are safe 100% human powered trail users. E-Bikes have motors and these other groups cannot be fooled by trying to hide that fact with "pedal assist" marketing efforts by the companies who sell E-Bikes.

We should keep all non-motorized trails just that: non-motorized for the safety of all trail users. Please note that I am not opposed to E-Bikes in general. I feel that they are great for those with physical limitations which prevent them from using a traditional bicycle. I also feel that they are great for commuting. I support most anything that gets people outdoors and exercising. However I feel that E-Bikes belong on trails and roads designated for motorized use and not on trails designated as non-motorized trails. As a mountain bike and trail advocate I have encouraged bicyclists to follow the rules and guidelines of each trail system whether those rules are actively enforced or not and whether one agrees with them or not.

For the benefit of all non-motorized trail users my hope is that all non-motorized trails will continue to have a No E-Bike policy for its non-motorized trails and that E-Bike users will do the right thing and only ride where they are truly permitted, on trails designated for motorized use.