

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/24/2020 5:49:02 AM

First name: Cynthia

Last name: McCarthy

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I oppose the proposal to open up National Forest lands to additional e-bike use. E-bikes must be considered a motor vehicle, not a bicycle. They must travel only where motor vehicles are allowed. The proposed rule suggests that environmental impacts should be studied in an EIS under NEPA. This sets up conflicts with the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 et seq.). E-bikes travel far into the backcountry and startle and disturb wildlife over great distances, due to their speed and quiet nature. E-bikes conflict with nonmotorized trail users: hikers, equestrians, and bicyclists. There is very little enforcement right now for trespass, illegal off-trail riding, and illegal trail development by some bikers, and e-bikes will increasingly trespass in Wilderness and other protected areas. This illegal use will degrade the wild character of Forest Service lands and should not be encouraged as this rule will encourage them to do. The Forest Service should withdraw this proposal.