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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to open up National Forest lands to increased e-bike use. I have several concerns about the proposed changes:

E-bike design is rapidly evolving; they will soon be able to achieve a speed of up to 55 mph. For that reason, they must continue to be treated as motor vehicles, not bicycles.

The proposed rule appears to set up conflicts with the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 et seq).

The impact of e-bikes should be thoroughly evaluated through an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The combination of speed and silent approach increases the likelihood of potentially dangerous encounters between e-bikes and both wildlife and nonmotorized trail users such as hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists. E-bikes are also more likely to startle and disturb wildlife at close quarters far into the backcountry, threatening their wellbeing.

The current lack of enforcement for trespass, illegal off-trail riding, and illegal trail development will encourage e-bike users to trespass into Wilderness and other protected areas, degrading the wildness of these lands.

E-bike use in national forests should not be encouraged as this rule will do. The Forest Service should withdraw this proposal.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Justina Cotter