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Comments: I strongly oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to open up my National Forest lands to additional e-bike use. Regular mountain bike use poses serious challenges to wilderness areas, and e-bikes represent an even greater threat.

As a result of their speed and quiet nature, e-bikes can travel much farther into the backcountry, and startle and disturb wildlife over far greater distances. E-bikes also conflict with other non-motorized trail users like hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists.

The current almost complete lack of enforcement against trespass, illegal off-trail riding, and illegal trail development by some bikers means that e-bikes will increasingly trespass into wilderness and other protected areas with no consequences. This illegal use will degrade the wild character of these lands.

Given that e-bikes are now being developed that will achieve speeds up to 55 mph, it is imperative that e-bikes must continue to be treated as motor vehicles, and be allowed to travel only where motor vehicles are allowed.

Finally, the proposed rule suggests likely environmental impacts that should be fully evaluated through an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In addition, it appears to set up conflicts with the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 et seq).

For all of the above reasons, the Forest Service should withdraw this ill-conceived proposal.