

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/25/2020 3:14:19 AM

First name: Jan

Last name: Benson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a long distance backpacker meaning I go out for a month at a time and backpack long trails such as the PCT, CDT, Colorado and Arizona Trail. There is nothing worse than being startled on the trail by a bicyclist. It destroys the beauty of the moment, disrupts the hike as you have to get off the trail for them (bicyclists on backcountry trails are impatient and refuse to wait), destroys the trail tread and is very unsafe for everyone else when they descend hills. Oftentimes the trails are already in poor condition and the tires of the bicycle just make them worse. Mud is the result leaving behind a poor trail tread. Can there be no place for folks who just want to hike in peace without a bicyclist barreling down on you??? What rights do hikers have??? And now you want to add motorized bicycles to the mix? I live in Seattle and have to put up with motorized bike riders. They are not regular bicyclist who generally follow the traffic rules, but instead folks looking for transportation or thrills without having to put out effort. I fail to see how they differ from mopeds other than they use a battery instead of gas. They do not belong with people walking. Let them build their own trails, but don't combine them with pedestrians. Can I sue you when they run or knock me over? And you are doing this for what? Then, are they going to activate beacons for help because they got lost or fell off the bicycles while speeding down the trail. Since locals respond to the PLB's, what are you going to do with the electric bicycle on a PLB call? If the rider evacuated with a helicopter what happens to the bicycle which can weigh between 30-70 pounds? If the bicycle is broken down, who is going to push it out? Next, how are you going to enforce a speed limit on the trail? The battery might limit them to 20 mph now, but what about improvements down the road? What is to stop them from speeding if there is a better battery? I am confident you don't have the resources to deal with any of the above because you barely have the resources for the trails you do maintain. This also sets up precedence. The national scenic trails are national and represent some of the best beauty the country has to offer. Currently you would need a waiver to allow bicycles on these trails, but as you open up some trails, where are you going to stop? Are you willing to destroy the backcountry just so someone can make more money or encourage an industry that doesn't need encouragement? And what about all the wildlife that lives on these trails? Are they supposed to change their behavior because someone wants to ride a motorized bike into the backcountry? Wildlife does not need more patches in the environment. The electric bicycles belong with other electric and similar motorized vehicles. Why can't they ride the trails the motorbikes and 4-wheel atv's use? Isn't that where they belong? They are motorized after all! I fail to see how they are different from other motorized vehicles. They just want more places they can ride not caring what damage they cause. Putting electric bicycles on trails built for hiking and riding horses is a very bad idea. Given how some horses react to my backpack, I can only imagine how they react to an electric bicycle on the trail. I read where someone said e-bikes would expand outdoor recreation to the elderly and disabled. WHAT? I am 67 years and ride a bicycle. Most elderly bicyclists I know are not going to ride an e-bike on trails for fear on injuring themselves. It is enough to control and navigate a bicycle on a dirt road which offers width and sight. Riding on a narrow trail which most trails are, with rocks, bushes/shrubs, and tree branches to contend with is a recipe for disaster. If you are disabled, how are you going to navigate a tree across the trail or a blow down? Who other than electric bicycle riders think this is really a good idea? Who really thoroughly thought this through?

If you are instead just looking at labelling e-bikes acceptable for riding on roads and trails for motorized vehicles, go ahead. They belong with motorized vehicles. They do not belong with pedestrians!