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Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to your proposed new rules 7700 & 7710. As a mountain biker, hiker and outdoor recreation enthusiast, it is exciting to see new users who are able to access outdoor recreation via e-bikes in the last several years but I am extremely concerned about the idea of classifying e-bikes in terms of motorized versus non-motorized.

The current direction brings up the possibility of non-motorized trails being changed to motorized which is completely unacceptable. This solution will jeopardize funding sources to maintain traditionally non-motorized trails and, by not aligning with recent decisions made within the DOI agencies, will cause more confusion among e-mountain bikers on where they can and cannot ride.

I recommend the following simpler solutions:

Adopt Class 1 e-bikes as non-motorized transportation.

Adopt Class 2 and 3 e-bikes as motorized transportation.

Allow Class 1 on non-motorized trails upon completion of an environmental review and public comment process, driven by local forests and/or districts.

Prohibit Class 2 and 3 on non-motorized trails.

Encourage programmatic NEPA review of eMTB impact on non-motorized trails, at the District, Forest or Regional level, to ease the review burden on a trail by trail basis.

Approach eMTB access by using a "Closed Unless Signed Open" basis.

By allowing Class 1 on non-motorized trails on a case by case basis and upon completion of a review process, the USFS offers flexibility at the local level and preserves maintenance funding sources that can be pursued by hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers to help maintain thousands of miles of trail throughout the United States. Class 1 e-bike technology is quickly becoming ubiquitous, so the above approach also makes enforcement easier and reduces consumer confusion.

It is my understanding that the above approach is also in line with the wishes of People for Bikes, the International Mountain Bicycling Association, multiple mountain bike manufacturers, as well as my own local mountain bike organization, the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance.

Thank you,
Scotty Stalp