

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/26/2020 12:35:50 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I oppose the introduction of e-bikes of any class on non-motorized trails.

Safety is my most significant concern. Safety of trail users is compromised by the higher speeds that e-bikes allow. Class 1 e-bikes have motor assist to 20 mph and motor power up to 750 watts. Many e-bike advocates point to examples where e-bikes are used on trails in Europe but there is a significant difference because European bikes are limited to 15 mph and 250-watt motors. Higher speeds and more power on US bikes mean that closing speeds between users on narrow two-way trails will be higher than with pedal bikes and will endanger users.

The bike industry's lobbying arm, People for Bikes, is advocating that we ignore the fact that these bikes have motors and also that the Forest Service has no significant enforcement capability to control whether 20 mph or 40 mph e-bikes are used on the trails. This lobbying group is 100% funded by a bike industry that simply wants to increase bike sales. This effort to lobby the Federal Government for changes to e-bike access started when the Department of the Interior and the Park Service held regular meetings (currently being litigated as illegal) called the "E-bike Partner and Agency Group". These meetings were not open to the public or to organizations outside the bike industry. The entire process should be re-started and include representatives of all trail users not just industry advocates.

The bike industry has adapted e-bike technology originally developed for use on paved roads and advocated that it be used on narrow single track trails without any consideration of the different use environment. Even one of the most influential bike developers in the US (Joe Vadeboncoeur, formerly of Trek) has said that the US Class 1 e-bike is too fast and powerful for single track trails. Why aren't we listening to him?

Reference: <https://tinyurl.com/weme3ru>

Conclusion:

Many e-bike advocates claim they 'just want to keep up with their friends'. If this were true, e-bikes for trail use would have pedal assist limits of 10 or 15 mph since this is as fast as most people can manage on conventional bikes. Clearly, much of the demand for e-bike use on trails is to allow fit riders to go faster and further. Don't let our non-motorized trails be converted to motorized trails.