Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/26/2020 2:45:08 PM First name: Erika Last name: Szonntag Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hi, I have been an avid mountain biker and hiker for two decades and I feel that e-bikes might represent a significant issue if not addressed properly. Any bike with an electric motor needs to remain a motor vehicle as previous Forest Service direction has stated and should only be allowed on trails open to motor vehicles as determined in the Travel Management Planning and subsequent Motor Vehicle Use maps. The future of e-bikes will be expanding rapidly with technology advancing where e-bikes will be faster and battery life will be longer, which will result in more use and e-bike users accessing areas they did not previously. The social impacts will be significant as e-bikes users go faster and further coming into contact with more non e-bikers setting up for serious conflict. Also enforcement already is lacking and as the technology advances it will be harder and harder to tell a class 1 e-bike from any other class and it will be virtually impossible to enforce it. It would be like me trying to enforce a 125cc motorcycle limit on a motorcycle trail; how do I tell the difference between a 125cc, a 250cc or 500cc motorcycle? You can't and that is what will happen with e-bikes, any e-bike class will be riding wherever they can. Lastly it is constantly being thrown around that e-bikes are no more damaging than a regular bike, this can't be further from the truth. First off, they weigh nearly twice as much as a regular bike (minimal 45 lbs), secondly they can go significantly faster uphill, and lastly they go further. So anytime you have a vehicle that weighs more, goes faster and can go over the same route many more times, there will be more natural resource damage. This has to be considered and analyzed thoroughly. Please keep e-bikes as motorized vehicles and only allow them on motorized routes. I am an avid mountain biker and I would hate to see a poor choice now affecting future management of an area. Mountain bikers already had a really tough time gaining access and being recognized as a legitimate use in many areas, let's not jeopardize that by bowing to the industry. There are miles and miles of trails and roads that e-bikes can currently access legally, no need to stir things up more.