

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/22/2020 11:21:00 PM

First name: Ralph

Last name: Bradt

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I strongly oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to allow any non-motorized trails on my National Forest lands to be opened up to e-bike use.

An e-bike is a motorized vehicle and, as such, does not belong on non-motorized trails. Allowing them is contrary to the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule. Recreational opportunities already abound on the road and trail system designated for motor vehicle use.

Already, the increasing use of mountain bikes is damaging trails by the nature of the linear tracks they leave, which carry water and increase erosion. Adding e-bikes will only increase this damage.

Further, allowing e-bikes will only increase the conflicts now seen between mountain bikes and other non-motorized trail users. Already, the greater speeds and distances covered by bikes are allowing deeper penetration into our diminishing wild places and into the habitats of wildlife which are, even now, being pushed deeper into the backcountry by increasing human presence.

The argument that the use of e-bikes expands recreational opportunities for the elderly and disabled could also be made for the use of all kinds of motorized transportation, but this doesn't make it right. The elderly and disabled, currently and into the future, make up only a small part of e-bike use. The majority of e-bike use will be by younger, able users who simply want to go farther faster. I no longer am able to cover the miles I once was able to on foot, but I value the miles I am able to hike and I do so to enjoy the quiet and solitude of nature, away from technology. Allowing e-bikes on non-motorized trails will greatly decrease the opportunities that I and the many like me have to escape technology.

Increasing popularity in itself is no reason to allow e bike use. In fact, just the opposite is true. The significant environmental and social impacts of e-bikes need to be fully addressed under the National Environmental Policy Act. The impacts of allowing e-bikes should require far more than a simple rulemaking and this proposal should be withdrawn from consideration.