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Comments: In Regards to the Proposal to Allow Electric Mountain Bikes (E-bikes) Access to Single Track "hiking trails" on National Forest Lands.

To whom it may concern.

I have personally witnessed the huge growth of mountain biking and subsequent unacceptable amount of damage to hundreds of miles of hiking trails in the Willamette National Forest for the last 20+ years. I have submitted input about certain trails, sometimes complaints about being nearly hit by mountain bikers as well as talked to the Willamette National Forest trails maintenance staff about these issues. They have more or less blown off most of my concerns over the last 20 years. Trails continue to be severely degraded and more and more conflicts between hikers and mountain bikers arise. I encounter mountain bikers almost every time I go out speeding down trails with little regard to the safety of others as well as themselves.

I have encountered mountain bikers inside Wilderness areas (Red Buttes Wilderness) on June 27, 2020. I have documented mountain bike tracks on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) where it is prohibited in the Oregon Cascades Recreation Area (OCRA) on several occasions. (Btw, the Willamette NF proposes to build a new access trail to some relatively pristine multiple lake basin that will cross the PCT in the OCRA which will exponentially increase the illegal use of the PCT by mountain bikers.)

For these reasons and others listed below I oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to open up my National Forest lands to additional e-bike use for the following reasons.

This proposed rule suggests likely environmental impacts that should be fully evaluated through an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposed rule appears to set up conflicts with the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 et seq).

E-bikes must continue to be treated as motor vehicles, not bicycles. New e-bikes are being developed now that will drive up to 55 mph. E-bikes must travel only where motor vehicles are allowed.

Impacts to Rare and Sensitive Wildlife. Because of their speed and quiet nature, e-bikes can travel much farther into the backcountry, and startle and disturb wildlife over far greater distances.

I oppose because E-bikes will conflict with other non-motorized trail users like hikers, horseback riders, wildlife viewers, photographers and spiritual practitioners.

I oppose access of E-bikes because there is almost no enforcement now for trespass, illegal off-trail riding, and illegal trail development by some bikers, e-bikes will increasingly trespass into Wilderness and other protected areas with no consequences. This illegal use will degrade the wild character of these lands and should not be encouraged as this rule will do.

In short, the U.S. Forest Service should withdraw this proposal to allow E-bikes access to national forest trails.

Our national forests should not be converted to an unregulated "Disneyland" amusement park where public safety is an afterthought.