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Title:

Comments: PLEASE ALLOW CLASS 1 E-MOUNTAIN BIKES ON THE SAME TRAILS THAT ARE LEGAL FOR TRADITIONAL MOUNTAIN BIKES!!!

Thank you for the opportunity for the public to engage on FSM 7700 and 7710, which would revise Forest Service directives to update and clarify guidance on management of electric bicycle (e-bike) use on National Forest System lands.

Class 1 e-mountain bikes should be re-categorized to non-motorized vehicles and should be allowed wherever traditional mountain bikes have been allowed on the Forest Service trail systems. They require pedal-assist which means if you do not pedal you do not move forward i.e., they require human power to operate, not just a motor. Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes should continue to be prohibited from non-motorized trails because they can be completely powered by their motors with no effort on the part of their riders.

This re-categorization of the Class 1 e-bikes seems a simple solution to sharing the trails without changing the non-motorized designation that protects the trails from motorized use. My understanding is that by keeping the non-motorized designation we also protect funding of the trails.

The motors on Class 1 e-bikes only provide varying amounts of assistance to help you move forward when you are pedaling but need extra assistance. They are like a gentle hand giving you a push when you really need it. They are not loud or obnoxious unless their rider is. Responsible riders are going to be responsible regardless of the type of bike they are on, just as irresponsible bicyclists will be irresponsible regardless of the type of bike they are on. The only people I know of who have e-mountain bikes are older seasoned riders who can no longer ride without assist although I'm sure there are others out there.

I've seen plenty of e-bike traffic on trails even though it's not allowed and I have not seen any additional wear and tear or wildlife disturbance than from hikers, horseback riders or traditional mountain bike riders. We all need to be responsible regardless of our mode of transportation.

I am 70 years old. I've been using the Forest Service and other trails my entire life. I am an avid mountain bike rider, horse person, hiker, snowshoer and backcountry skier. Specifically, I have been a mountain biker for close to 40 years so I'm not new to the sport. I donate to several trail organizations, belong to outdoor clubs that support trail use, help build trails, and pay taxes that I hope contribute to the Forest Service and other organizations that support trail systems.

Because of multiple injuries, surgeries, and age, I can no longer power a traditional mountain bike without assist. My e-mountain bike will open up the possibility of me being able to get out and enjoy the trails I love once again. There is a whole generation of baby boomers like myself that are re-inventing how to stay healthy, happy, and young. We are long term contributors to our outdoor environments in substantial ways. These contributions should be considered as part of our voice.

I have read pages and pages of the comments submitted. Near as I can tell, most of the people who are submitting negative responses have either always been opposed to any mountain bikes on trails and/or have no real experience with Class 1 e-mountain bikes as shown by their comments about how loud they are, how destructive they are, how they are cheating, how fast they are, how irresponsible their riders are, etc., none of which is necessarily true. I would suggest to every one of the those who are opposed to these bikes sharing the trails that they at least try one or get educated about Class 1 e-mountain bikes before they judge them and their riders.

Finally, the mountain bike community is responsible for a large part of the natural surface trail infrastructure that exists today on our federal, state and local public lands. Hundreds of organized mountain bike clubs around the country manage thousands of volunteers who work closely with land managers on trail development, trail maintenance, and trail education for all users. Much of this work relies on funding sources specific to non-motorized trail projects and local support. Our local mountain bike club has adopted several local trails and Forest Service trails which without our help would be in terrible disrepair because of budget cuts. Our club does most of the ongoing maintenance of many existing trails and development of new trails in the area. I have

volunteered many times to help in this effort as have my fellow traditional mountain bikers and Class 1 e-mountain bikers.

As our population ages, there will be more and more electric bike owners. These bikes are here to stay. They are part of the fastest growing niche of the bicycle industry. All the land management groups will need to find a way to include them in trail use mandates. Change must be embraced. It is inevitable as shown by our recent national and world challenges!

Sincerely:

Barbara Mortier