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Comments: I stand in opposition to the Forest Service proposal to open up National Forest lands to expanded e-bike use for the following reasons:

1. E-bikes can travel farther and faster into the backcountry than hikers or equestrians, increasing the disruption to wildlife. Habitat fragmentation is already a critical threat to wildlife, and increased use of e-bikes will make it worse.
2. Bikes in general are causing erosion and braiding of trails. The use of e-bikes on more trails will increase the traffic and therefore the problems we are already seeing.
3. Some e-bikes are capable of great speeds. They are also much heavier than non-motorized bikes, making them more of a hazard to hikers and equestrians.
4. A lack of current enforcement for illegal bike trails and trespass into areas where bikes are not allowed predicts that increased trespass will occur into wilderness areas with no consequences.
5. 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).

I have personally experienced the impacts of the increased mountain bike travel in our national forest. The most recent example was several weeks ago on the Coal Creek Trail (#677) in the San Juan National Forest. On our way up the trail we encountered a group of about 6 mule deer that we were able to observe for 10 minutes or so. We noticed and documented numerous places on the trail where it was braided or banked by bicycles making tight turns. Several miles up the trail we noticed the bottom of a socially created downhill bike trail. We found the top of the illegal trail and followed it down to the point where it intersected with the main trail again, noting the jumps that had been created along the way. The folks who create and use these trails are there solely for the thrill, not to appreciate wild lands for what they are. As we descended the trail two riders with e-bikes passed us on their way up. As we continued down we could hear from behind us the whoops and shrieks of some mountain bikers from quite a ways away. As they approached we moved off of the trail. Four bikers came down the trail at a fairly high rate of speed (considering the terrain), sending dirt flying around each hairpin turn and going off the main trail whenever there was a "jump" to be made. What were our chances of seeing any wildlife from that point on in our hike? Who will there be to enforce any rules regarding e-bikes? Do those of us who value peace, quiet and the ability to view wildlife have to look forward to a future where those opportunities do not exist? Opening up our public lands to e-bikes will make an already difficult situation worse.

The Forest Service should withdraw this proposal.