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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I support the Forest Service's proposed revisions to directives regarding management of electric bicycle use on National Forest System lands (FSM 7700 and 7710 E-bikes #ORMS-2619).

Clear policies and rules for electric bicycle management will facilitate electric bicycle management, give more Americans opportunities to explore our public lands, and provide common sense solutions for pressing issues such as traffic congestion, parking, maintenance and emissions reduction.

I support these changes because:

1. Forest Service policies and laws concerning electric bicycle use on public lands are outdated and are confusing for land managers, consumers, small businesses and local governments. These changes are a step in the right direction toward resolving that confusion.
2. The proposed definitions of the three classes of electric bicycles are consistent with the types of electric bicycles people ride.
3. Modernizing the definition of electric bicycles so that they may be used much like regular bicycles will encourage the safe use of electric bicycles and ensure more sensible access.

I respectfully request one modification to the proposed changes -- that electric bicycles be removed from the definition of "motor vehicle" and considered to be a non-motorized use. Electric bicycles are ridden, and should be managed, like traditional bicycles rather than motor vehicles. As an e-bike rider, my desired experience is also identical to that of a regular bike rider and I seek the opportunity to ride my e-bike on the types of trails, roads, and paths that are designated as non-motorized. These areas should continue to be designated as non-motorized and land managers should have the discretion to permit e-bike use. This would align Forest Service policy with other U.S. laws. The Department of the Interior and 28 states (and counting) define electric bicycles as bicycles, exclude them from the motor vehicle classification, and generally allow their use on non-motorized trails.

My 60 yr old father recently purchased an e-bike. He has been riding mountain bikes for 25 years (before I was born) and has seen the sport evolve over the years. His new pedal assist e-bike has allowed him to continue enjoying a sport that he loves. He can keep up with us (his 20 something boys) on the uphill stretches. People who are opposed to allowing e-bikes on trails have a gross misperception of what they really are and how they function. My dad isn't racing up the hill, he is peddling hard like the rest of us. It isn't a motorcycle. The e-bike has allowed my mother to enjoy the sport with my dad. He was so disappointed this past summer when he and my mom had planned a bike trip near Seward, AK and were excited about the trip but were turned back at the start due to a sign banning e-bikes. It was frustrating for them since they know that e-bikes have no different effect on the trails than non e-bikes. You can't tear up a trail peddling an e-bike. Please consider changing the policy so that e-bikes can go anywhere a non e-bikes can. They are not motorized vehicles like an ATV or motorcycle. I am sure there are many others like my parents who wish to use this new technology to continue enjoying a sport into their golden and retirement years on public lands.

Thanks for your consideration of my plea.