

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/27/2020 3:53:34 AM

First name: bruce

Last name: berry

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in regards to 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).

I respectfully ask that electric bicycles be removed from the definition of a "motor vehicle."

Clear electric bicycle policies and rules will facilitate 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. Forest Service policies and laws concerning electric bicycle use on public lands are outdated and are confusing for land managers, consumers, small businesses and local governments.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, and it's necessary to properly define the three classes of electric bicycles consistently. 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.

However, these proposed changes could result in a substantial number of non-motorized trails, paths, or roads being converted to motorized in order to allow electric bicycles - an unintended consequence and management strategy for the vast network of non-motorized Forest Service areas. Due to the risks associated with re-designating our non-motorized facilities as motorized, I do not support the proposed revised directives as written. Instead, electric bicycles should be removed from the definition of "motor vehicle" and considered a non-motorized use.

Electric bicycles are ridden, and should be managed, like traditional bicycles rather than motor vehicles. E-bike riders are similar to that of regular bike riders, and in most state and federal statutes, electric bicycles are defined as bicycles, excluded from motor vehicle classifications, and generally allowed on non-motorized trails.

-or-

Electric bicycles could be introduced as a category unto their own. e-assist bicycles should be categorized in their own class and different from bicycles or motorized vehicles. In that way, trails could be opened for riding while at the same time rules could be made to exclude unfair actions such as using the e-bicycles as a leg up for fishing and hunting grounds. As well, I am worried that if e-bicycles are categorized as motorized vehicles and subsequently trail systems are opened to that new category motorcycles along with e-motorcycles could introduce a whole new level of safety concerns along with massive trail system degradation.

In short, electric assist bicycles most closely associated with what we know as a bicycle have great benefits in that: 1. These bikes do not degrade or erode trails specific to bike use. 2. Do not present safety concerns to others as they are ridden at bicycle speed according to the skill level of the operator. 3. e-assist bicycles get people out riding more often and for longer periods of time. 4. Anything that promotes a healthy lifestyle for masses should be highly considered due to the more sedentary U.S. we now live in. 5. e-assist bicycles can be a great boost to economies from bike shops, part manufactures, gas stations to travel to destinations, hotels, restaurants, etc. etc.