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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear BTNF,

Thank you for allowing public comment on your proposal to allow e-bikes on certain trails within the BTNF.

I absolutely oppose any and all use of ebikes on any trail which does not allow motorcycles or motorized use.

Ebikes are not human powered and any assist, electronic or not, is still an assist. Mountain biking is subject to the laws of physics and user fitness. There is an impact to trails but much less than assisted types of transportation (motorcycles, UTV and ebikes). Pedal assist can access areas that normal mountain biking cannot. They can access areas with speed, have more impact to trails and use of ebikes should be considered motorized.

I sympathize with the idea of using pedal assist for aging recreationalists, but it is not the BTNF's responsibility to make sure those that are not in the category of adaptive have access to all trails. Is it BTNF's responsibility to make sure every aged recreationist has access? They already do, specifically on trails and roads that allow motorized use. There are plenty of those already.

Allowing ebikes (essentially motorized traffic) on BTNF trails which are not designated as motorized, is a slippery, slippery slope. Where does it end? Ebikes can be considered a gateway use. If you allow ebikes, are smaller motorcycles next? What about UTV's? What about e-vehicles? E-UTV's? Just because they are non-polluting does not mean they do not have an impact and are appropriate.

Ebikes have more impact on trails and other recreationists. They go faster and because of that speed, they impact hikers, other mountain bikers and horseback use. They may not be loud but they impact trail maintenance, trail use (which in these areas proposed are very crowded areas) and the recreational experience.

I am an avid hiker, have had horses in the past and enjoy a good mountain bike ride. I appreciate a quiet and uncrowded recreational experience. I use the trails in question at least 3-5 times per week. Allowing ebikes will have a direct impact on my experience. I am concerned for my safety, the safety of my dogs and my young son who enjoys stopping randomly and picking up sticks and pretty rocks. I enjoy a human powered, quiet, slow and safe recreational experience.

Our trails are already very busy. Not every trail can have all uses. The appropriate place for ebikes is on paved pathways and roads and trails that allow motorized use (which all aged, out of shape, lazy, and folks that love motors can use). There are many, many of these trails in the BTNF already and no need to expand their use.

If these regulations are amended, who or what is the enforcement? I see no enforcement currently and have no idea how these rules will actually be enforced. Permits? Who is going to make sure the ebikes have permits? Allowing ebikes is opening a whole can of worms and will only lead to conflict.

In conclusion, I oppose all ebike use on trails that are designated as non motorized use. Ebikes must be considered motorized and must follow all rules and regulations with that designation. Do not allow their use on these trails.

Thank you.