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First name: Steve

Last name: Grossman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a senior who enjoys hiking the affected Jackson area trails and enjoys the prospects of an e-mountain bike, I appreciate the proposal to open certain trails to e-bikes and the opportunity to provide input. While I applaud the limited initial effort, I strongly object to the scope. My focus is only on those mixed use trails included in the proposal. And notwithstanding the proposal being limited to class 1 e-bikes, I question the ability and effectiveness of any enforcement efforts - as noted below, the current restrictions are not effectively enforced (nor for that matter are restrictions easier to enforce such as dog leash requirements in the trail head area effectively enforced - other than on certain Saturday mornings when Randy and the volunteer whose name I apologize for forgetting are present to enforce them).

Old Pass Road

I will start with this trail, as it is the one that has the most foot and pet traffic. I understand the advantage of giving users of the bike only trails the ability to use the Old Pass Road to e-bike up, and as a future e- mountain biker, I get the attraction of e-biking this trail. Unfortunately these benefits are greatly outweighed by the risks.

Increasing the amount of bike traffic and introducing more bikes moving at higher speeds adds a danger to the hikers - especially the large number of senior and young children hikers. In my experience, very few bikers provide warning when they are approaching either up or down hill. And, unlike the kids in e-bikes on the bike paths in town, these e-bikers will not have bells on their bikes to warn the pedestrians. Without wanting to over-generalize, in my experience, more e-bikers are less considerate notwithstanding they are moving at a higher rate of speed. See my example below.

Even more important than the direct impact on the older and younger hikers, the biggest problem I have with opening up the Old Pass Road to e-bikes is the impact on the wildlife. A highlight of this trail system is the large populations of moose, deer, elk, bear and fox that call this home. In fact, we have to start out recognizing that we, whether on foot, on bike or on e-bike, are encroaching on the home of this wildlife. I fear that the introduction of e-bikes will be the tipping point. Most of these animals are accommodating of our encroachment, but as we add more aggressive human behavior we will undoubtedly witness more aggressive wildlife behavior. Let me make my point by recounting a recent experience on the Old Pass Road.

A few weeks ago as I was hiking up the OPR to the top of the pass with my dog. It was raining so there were few of us on the road. As I approached Crater Lake I was passed by a young gentleman on a bike. A few switchbacks later I noticed the biker was stopped on the road, and as I looked up I noticed why - a Moose and her calf were grazing on the side of the road. I had seen these two the week before down the trail. After leashing my dog, the biker and I waited for about 5 minutes to see if the Moose would move away. Ultimately tiring of the wait in the rain, we both turned around and headed back down. About two switchbacks down the road I saw an individual coming uphill on an electric unicycle. I recognized having seen him once before on the OPR. As he approached, he was clearly not paying attention to me or his surroundings (he had ear buds in and appeared to be listening through them). I called out to warn him of the two moose ahead. He acted oblivious, so I called out again. He responded with "Oh yeah there are a couple of moose down below".

This suggested to me that he had just buzzed by the moose below and gave me an inclination of how he would react to the moose above. As he passed I asked what he was doing on the OPR on the electric unicycle. His response was to flash me the backhanded peace sign as he sped by and encourage me to have a nice day! I have no doubt if the moose were still near the road this person went right by them. And, although I have no scientific proof, I am convinced the more moose are exposed to aggressive behavior like this electric unicyclist, the more likely they are to be aggressive in human interactions. Admittedly this is not a class 1 e-bike, but as referenced I expect this limitation will not be effectively enforced and there will be more use of the OPR by modes

of transport like the elective unicycle. In any event, the same concern applies to class 1 e-bikes. As they are able to move quickly passed "hazards" like wildlife, they are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior and just go by. The bicyclist and I both did the right thing and turned around. I fear that your proposal will lead to more aggressive interactions with wildlife and as a result more aggressive wildlife. Remember, we are encroaching on their habitat.

Phillips Connector

Your scope document indicates this is a bike only trail. As I have hiked this regularly I am hoping that is not correct. The trail sign at the OPR end of the trail is silent as to type of use. The sign at the Phillips trail parking lot end of the trail identifies the Phillips Connector trail as a multi use trail. And the Jimmy Mom's trail sign off the Phillips Connector indicates Jimmy Mom's trail is downhill bikes only (which logically would not be necessary if Phillips Connector was bikes only). I understand the signs are not definitive; so if I am wrong and this is a bike only trail, please replace the incorrect signs, and please apologize for me to the bikers I have encountered (and always given the right of way to).

If the PC trail is multiuse I don't believe it is necessary to allow e-bikes to give them access to the bike only trails, e.g Jimmy Mom's.

Phillips multi use trails

For the reasons referenced above with respect to the OPR, I would discourage opening these trails to e-bike use. Granted they are used less by hikers, but they offer greater danger to hikers due to the steepness and blind turns that could lead to high speed collisions. The suggestion that allowing e-bikes would reduce parking congestion due to the current need to stage cars, if true, only would apply to the Phillips parking lot. The small parking lot on the Fish Creek Road end will not be able to handle the increased usage of more e-bikers parking at the bottom (notwithstanding that some will access the trail by biking to the trailhead).

Thanks for considering my comments.