

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/30/2023 10:31:52 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ranger Stiles & Bridger-Teton decision makers,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed e-bike use on Teton Pass. While I understand the pressure to open more singletrack in our area to e-bikes, I have serious concerns about the proposed use. Not only would the change cause irreparable impacts to the area, but it would also undeniably have cascading effects for other singletrack in our region (and likely for winter recreation down the road).

My premier concern is that e-bikes will dramatically alter the amazing human-powered experience currently present on Teton Pass. Pedal bicyclists will have to pull over to let e-bikers pass, especially on uphill/cross country terrain. It doesn't seem fair that traditional users would have to bear the burden of this change. E-bikes are "motorized vehicles" - there's no question about that. I do not believe they belong in non-motorized travel areas.

Many comments have indicated that opening the proposed trails and the Old Pass Road to e-bikes would increase access for some users. The outdoors are for everyone, and I understand the sentiment that e-bike may allow older or less able individuals to recreate in a way they currently are unable to. However, increased access inherently means increased use, which means increased management needs. There will be more trail maintenance. There will be greater demands on trailheads and infrastructure. There will be more accidents and user conflicts. Someone will have to enforce the Class-1 rule. These burdens fall on the BTNF, and in my understanding, resources are already spread thin. Ultimately, insufficient management means a diminished recreation experience for ALL users, motorized users included.

To some, Teton Pass seems like a small and reasonable area to begin exploring e-bike usage in Teton County more seriously. I appreciate the sentiment about starting small if you're going to start at all, particularly because it would indicate management challenges at a smaller scale. That said, opening Teton Pass trails and the Old Pass Road to e-bikes would create a slippery slope. Before we know it, trails all over the valley would be opened (or poached, intentionally and unintentionally), and we would begin to have mechanized over-snow travel to worry about.

If you decide to move forward with the proposal, I urge you to strongly consider if and how the proposed use will be sufficiently managed by the BTNF, and what a lack of management may mean for recreation in the valley.

Thank you for your time, and for everything you do to provide recreation opportunities on the BTNF!

Sincerely,

Anna Gibson