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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the expansion of E-bike access on Jackson area trails. I have several concerns with the proposal. Pedal-assist E-bikes allow individuals to access terrain that they do not have the physical ability to access on their own. While this provides some benefits for those with disabilities, I do not think that they outweigh the risks, which include an added burden on search and rescue volunteers, overcrowding on trails, and impacts to wildlife.

The NPS literature review provided in the supporting documents notes that E-bike users have more single-bicycle crashes than regular bicycle riders. On trails that require a specialized skill set, E-bike riders may be able to access terrain for which they do not have the skills to navigate, and that terrain may be much farther from the trailhead than they would be able to get on their own. I am concerned that allowing E-bikes on trails will lead to an increase in search and rescue requests on an already overburdened crew. We have already seen this phenomenon of unpreparedness due to the ubiquity of cell phones and the false sense of security they provide.

Allowing E-bikes on trails will also increase the use of those trails. This will impact the enjoyment of other users, particularly hikers. The NPS literature review pointed out that bikers are usually indifferent when they come across hikers, but hikers do not like to come across bikers. Allowing E-bikes is likely to increase the number and proportion of trail users on bikes and E-bikes, degrading the experience of hikers to the point where they will likely stop using those areas.

Finally, allowing E-bikes will have an impact on wildlife in the area. Recent studies have shown that wildlife move away from areas with even minor human sounds. Adding a user group will increase use on trails, adding stress for wildlife.

E-bikes are a great option for commuting to work, and they are already allowed on all of our local trails that allow motorized use. They are not a good fit for non-motorized trails. Please do not expand E-bike use on forest service trails.