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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed allowance of pedal-assist e-bikes in Deschutes NF. While I recognize the growing popularity of e-bikes, I believe their inclusion on these trails poses significant risks and challenges that outweigh their benefits.

Trail Damage and Maintenance: Studies have shown that e-bikes, due to their increased speed and weight, can cause more trail erosion and damage compared to traditional bicycles. A study by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) indicated that e-bikes can contribute to greater soil displacement and trail degradation, which would increase maintenance costs and efforts to preserve the trail system's integrity.

User Experience: The introduction of e-bikes on trails designed for non-motorized use can significantly alter the experience for current users. Traditional mountain bikers value the tranquility and physical challenge provided by these trails. Allowing e-bikes could undermine these aspects, leading to a potential decrease in usage by these groups. A survey conducted by the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance found that a majority of traditional trail users were opposed to sharing trails with e-bikes, citing concerns about safety, trail congestion, and changes to the trail experience.

Regulatory Precedents: The U.S. Forest Service has historically managed certain trails for non-motorized use to preserve their natural state and ensure a specific type of recreational experience. Allowing e-bikes could set a precedent that might open the door to other forms of motorized recreation, further complicating trail management and enforcement efforts. The National Park Service, for example, differentiates between motorized and non-motorized trail uses to protect natural resources and ensure visitor safety and enjoyment.

In conclusion, while e-bikes offer a novel form of recreation and transportation, their inclusion in Deschutes NF trail systems present significant challenges and risks. I urge the U.S. Forest Service to consider these concerns and maintain the current non-motorized status of these trails to preserve their safety, integrity, and enjoyment for all users.

Thank you for considering my comments.