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Comments: I am writing to voice my strong opposition to Class 1, Pedal-assist E-bikes on Select Trails #66475. While e-bikes are becoming more popular, their presence on natural-surface trails designed for human-powered bikes creates serious safety, environmental, and experiential concerns. I believe our trail systems should remain reserved for traditional, non-motorized mountain biking, and I hope you'll consider the following reasons.

One of the most immediate impacts I've experienced is how fast e-bikes travel on the trails. Even Class 1 models can travel at significantly higher speeds than traditional mountain bikes, particularly uphill or on rolling terrain. This creates an intimidating atmosphere, especially on narrow singletrack, where I feel unsafe or pressured to move aside quickly. That intimidation has made me, and others I've spoken with, less likely to want to ride. Our trails should feel welcoming and inclusive, not high-speed or high-pressure.

There's also a clear safety issue that comes from combining faster, heavier bikes with narrow, shared-use trails. E-bikes carry more momentum and require longer distances to stop, making it harder for riders to avoid collisions with others, especially on blind corners, technical features, or mixed-use routes shared with hikers or families. As speeds increase, so does the risk of serious injury.

E-bikes also stir up much more dust than traditional bikes, especially when ridden at speed. Heavier frames, larger tires, and motor-assisted momentum mean more soil gets displaced, especially on dry, loose terrain (which Bend has plenty of), which brings me to trail degradation. Trail degradation is also an increasingly visible issue. E-bikes are significantly heavier than traditional mountain bikes (often by 20 to 30 pounds), which leads to more wear on climbs, braking zones, and corners. The torque from pedal-assist motors accelerates this damage.

The reality is e-bikes are simply not necessary on our local trails. Here in Bend, we are surrounded by accessible trail systems with moderate elevation gain-these are not extreme alpine routes.

It's also important to remember that e-bikes are, by definition, motorized vehicles. Even Class 1 models use electric motors to enhance performance. Allowing them on mountain bike trails, which are designed for non-motorized, human-powered recreation, fundamentally changes the character of the experience. We don't allow motorcycles or ATVs on these trails, and e-bikes fall into a similar category. The trails were not built for powered machines, and allowing them sets a precedent that could open the door to further motorized encroachment.

Finally, there's growing concern around battery-related safety and fire risk. Lithium-ion batteries, especially in off-road environments where they can be punctured or damaged, present a legitimate fire hazard. Given the dry, fire-prone conditions we experience in Central Oregon, we must be cautious about introducing unnecessary risks to the landscape, especially ones tied to recreational use.

In conclusion, I ask that our community leaders, trail stewards, and land managers consider the cumulative impact of allowing e-bikes on our mountain bike trails. These trails are a shared resource, and their preservation depends on maintaining a balance of access, safety, and sustainability. For the health of our environment and the quality of our trail experience, I respectfully urge you to maintain the no e-bikes on trails policy for all classes.