

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/10/2025 9:06:55 PM

First name: Gary

Last name: Gifford

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I oppose allowing ebikes on Deschutes Forest trails for the following reasons.

1. Class 1 pedal assist bikes have a top speed of 20 MPH. This may not seem like much while riding on a road, but this is RACE SPEED on a mountain bike. Ask anyone who rides with a speedometer. The upper limit of 20 MPH is often used as a SALES POINT for allowing ebikes on trails, whereas it should be viewed in the OPPOSITE light. The ability to ride that fast by immature or inexperienced riders even RIDING UP HILL poses a danger to the rider and every other trail user.

2. The poor volcanic soil quickly turns to dust and sand in our dry climate with heavy use. Many popular trails become nearly unrideable in places before riding season is half over. Even summer rain does not help to repair our hydrophobic volcanic soil. Allowing ebikes will add huge numbers of additional riders riding much longer and further on heavier bikes with generally heavier riders. Our trails barely sustain the traffic they get with acoustic bikes. Adding ebikes will TRIPLE or more the wear and tear.

3. Mountain biking is an ENDURANCE sport that also has a skill curve for bike handling and technical ability. Building endurance is a slow process as is skill development. Adding riders without the proper level of skill but with power and speed of a seasoned racer is only asking for a lot of serious injuries. Our trails are for non-motorized ENDURANCE activities, like running, hiking and biking. In no scenario does it make sense to allow motorized use.

4. For those who would like to ride ebikes because they can no longer ride an acoustic bike due to age or disability, there are over 6000 miles of dirt and gravel roads in Deschutes forest.

5. I would propose one exception to the "no ebike" rule, and that is for the disabled, the exception being this: "All adaptive bikes with three or more wheels may be operated on trails with the assistance of an electric motor".

6. People use the example of Oakridge and ebikes being allowed on trails there to support the argument for ebike use here. This is a bad example. Oakridge has FAR fewer trail users. Trail riding in Oakridge almost exclusively involves shuttling and mostly downhill riding. Most importantly, however, is the soil composition. The soil in Oakridge is more rocky, has much more clay content and has a much higher moisture content making it an ideal place to ride ebikes.

7. Our trails were built by mountain bikers (me included) primarily for mountain bikes. Anyone who has every been involved in trail building understands how soil conditions quickly degrade in the summer months, and that tread work is impossible in the dry conditions which makes even building or repairing trails in the summer impossible. We, the builders of these trails, don't want ebikes on them. Period. If Ebikers want to form a group or work with COTA to build some EBIKE SPECIFIC TRAILS FOR THEM TO RIDE, I welcome them to do so, but from what I've seen, the interest in ebiking has been limited to RIDING THE TRAILS and NOT being part of their creation or maintenance.

Just because ebikes exist and businesses want to sell them and people want to ride them is not a good reason to make historically non-motorized trails motorized. That's what letting ebikes will do and it is a bad idea on so many levels. Thank you for your consideration.