Fish and Wildlife Service

Comment re proposed access of Electric Bicycles to non-motorized trails

May 17, 2020

This comment is to oppose in the strongest possible terms allowing electric bicycles access to non-motorized trails on our public lands. By definition electric bicycles are MOTORIZED and thus this proposal is in direct opposition to the long-standing provision for limitations on motorized vehicles on our public lands.

The most important reason for this long-standing limitation is keeping the necessary large areas of public lands undisturbed for our wildlife. Without large areas for migration, foraging and breeding our wildlife will not survive the crush of human overpopulation and human egos wanting to "conquer" vast areas of wildlands without the humans having to actually work too hard (such as is needed for hiking and horseback riding). Wildlife require our support and protection to maintain their herds and even to maintain numbers sufficient to allow the "harvesting" that our hunters enjoy.

In addition, the exponential difference between the speeds attainable by human powered bicycles on trails versus the up to 50 mph speeds attainable by electric bicycles is a major risk to horses/riders and hikers on backcountry trails. By the time an electric bicycle rider sees the horse or hiker they likely will not be able to stop fast enough to avoid injury to horses or people. So how will electric bicycle riders be required to pay for injuries that their fast approach results in? Would the electric bike riders be required to have large insurance policies or large licensing fees to provide funds to cover the cost of rescue and injury/ disability treatment for the horses/ hikers that they injure? What about wildlife that the electric bicycles run down and injure? Would the electric bicycle riders be allowed to ride in "packs" thus causing even more disturbance to wildlife and increasing risk of injury to horses or hikers? Already on those trails ( not roads) where motorized use is allowed when dirt cyclists ride in packs it is much less likely that they can stop or even slow in order to avoid injury to horses and hikers (I know this personally having been overtaken on a narrow trail by several dirt cyclists who were unable to see far enough ahead to even slow down. Fortunately, I could jump far enough out of the way to avoid being run over by the cyclists in our back country.).

This proposal for electric bicycles to be allowed wherever human-powered bicycles are allowed on our public lands threatens wildlife, horses and humans to a huge degree and is thoroughly irresponsible.

Please do not allow this change to take place and destroy our backcountry!