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Route To:

Subject: Electric Bikes and Trail Management

To: Forest Supervisors

Please find the enclosed memo from the Washington Office regarding the management of electric bikes, also known as e-bikes, on National Forest System land. E-bike use has grown in popularity in the past few years, as have inquiries about where they can be accommodated on our National Forests. The memo is intended to clarify our current guidance of this recreational use. In summary:

The Forest Service's Travel Management Rule (TMR) and E-Bikes: The TMR defines "motor vehicle" as "any vehicle which is self-propelled, other than: (1) a vehicle operated on rails; and (2) any wheelchair or mobility device, including one that is battery-powered, that is designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, and that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area." 36 CFR 212.1. E-bikes have a motor, thereby are self-propelled, and are not covered by the exceptions in the definition. Therefore, **e-bikes are motor vehicles** and are subject to regulation under the TMR, which requires designation of National Forest System (NFS) roads, NFS trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. 36 CFR 212.51(a). Direction on e-bikes was included in a response in the Federal Register notice for the final over-snow vehicle rule. The response states: "New technologies that merge bicycles and motors, such as e-bikes, are considered motor vehicles under §212.1 of the TMR." 80 Fed. Reg. 4503 (Jan. 28, 2015).

Currently, e-bikes are allowed with the TMR designations for "Roads Open to All Vehicles", "Trails Open to All Vehicles", "Trails Open to Vehicles 50" or Less in Width", and "Trails Open to Motorcycles Only". In addition, new trail riding opportunities for e-bikes on existing non-motorized trails may be considered and designated as motorized trails by administrative units and ranger districts under travel management planning efforts, based on special vehicle class designations in accordance with 36 CFR 212.55. These motorized trail designation changes would involve appropriate environmental analysis, public participation and designation decisions that, once established, will be reflected on updated Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) in accordance with the TMR.

If you or your staff have any questions regarding this guidance, please contact Scott Haas, Trails and Dispersed Recreation Program Manager, at (303) 275-5164 or sehaas@fs.fed.us.

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cc: Scott Haas, Doug Wise, Ann Marie Verde, Dave Loomis

