



**Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda  
Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 9:00 AM  
Council Chambers - Eagle Town Hall  
200 Broadway Eagle, CO 81631**

*This agenda, meetings, and information about the Committee can be viewed at [www.Townofeagle.org](http://www.Townofeagle.org).*

**OSRAC MEETING ACCESS INFORMATION**

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**9:00 a.m. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

**9:05 a.m. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items; 3-Minute Limit Please)**

**9:10 a.m. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**9:13 a.m. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY MINUTES**

**9:15 a.m. DISCUSSION/ BUSINESS ITEMS**

9:15 a.m. (10 min) Committee Officer Elections - Secretary

9:25 a.m. (85 min) Preliminary review and discussion (with the Bureau of Land Management) for a proposal to consider supporting a review of class 1 pedal assist e-bikes policies on natural surface trails in Town-owned open space properties

10:50 a.m. (10 min) New Business/ Future Agenda items

**11:00 a.m. ADJOURN**



**Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee  
Unapproved Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 9:00 AM  
Council Chambers - Eagle Town Hall  
200 Broadway Eagle, CO 81631**

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**9:00 a.m. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL**

**Call to Order at: 9:03am**

**Roll Call:**

Committee members present: Dan Lambert, Jessica Foulis, Ernest Seager, Phil Kirkman, Ryan Gilmer, and Roger Mitchell

Committee members absent: Chris Choen and Chris Kehoe

Staff Present: Brian Lieberman, Open Space and Trails Manager

Town Council Present: Ellen Bodenhemier

**9:05 a.m. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- A member of the public requested that they be added to a future agenda item to make a presentation on strategic refinements to trail openings.

### **9:10 a.m. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

MOTION to adopt the Agenda as presented by Seager and second by Lambert. Motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor (Seager, Mitchell, Kirkman, Lambert, Gilmer, and Foulis) and 0 opposed.

### **9:13 a.m. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MINUTES**

MOTION to approve the December OSRAC meeting minutes by Lambert and second by Seager. Motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor (Seager, Mitchell, Kirkman, Lambert, Gilmer, and Foulis) and 0 opposed.

### **9:15 a.m. DISCUSSION/ BUSINESS ITEMS**

#### Election of Committee Officers

**MOTION to appoint Ernest Saeger as Chair (through Dec 2025), Jessica Foulis as Vice-Chair (through Dec 2026), and Ellen Bodenhemier as Committee Coordinator (through Dec 2026), and to determine the secretary at the February meeting by Saeger and second by Lambert. Motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor (Seager, Mitchell, Kirkman, Lambert, Gilmer, and Foulis) and 0 opposed.**

#### 2025 Open Space Budget Presentation

- Staff presented the adopted 2025 Open Space budget.
- The Committee accepted public comments.

#### Open Space Ranger Scope of Services and Development Timeline Presentation

- Staff presented a draft of the Scope of Services document for the Open Space Ranger Position and Program.
- Staff told the Committee that the development of the document was intended to provide clear expectations for roles and responsibilities for the new position to the community and funding partners.
- A committee member asked how time spent on events is captured in the time allocation for the position and suggested that it be considered.
- A Committee member suggested that first aid be included in the required training.
- A Committee member suggested to ensure that the golf course is included in the roles and responsibilities.
- The Committee accepted public comment.
- The Committee discussed the time allocation for April. Staff will review the April time allocation and consider if adjustments are needed.

#### New Business

- Staff said that they will bring the recommendation to enact seasonal use restrictions on tract OS-1 of the Reserve at Hockett Gulch to the Town Council at the 1/14/25 Council Meeting. Until that time, the parcel will remain open. Staff will post educational signage about recreation and wildlife on the property.

- Staff will have a preliminary discussion with the Council about e-bikes at the 1/14/25 meeting. The goal of the discussion will be to gauge preliminary interest in reviewing e-bike policies on open space lands, the amount of public input desired to review the policies, and if an outside consulting firm should be hired to assist with the review.

#### Future Agenda Items

- The Committee will nominate a Secretary at the February Meeting.
- Ellen said that the Adam Palmer Sustainability Fund is interested in meeting with OSRAC to discuss grants and overlap with restoration projects.
- A representative from the BLM will attend the next OSRAC meeting to answer questions about the e-bike NEPA assessment on BLM lands.

#### **10:30 a.m. ADJOURN**

MOTION to ADJOURN at 10:42 a.m. by Seager and second by Kirkman. Motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor (Seager, Mitchell, Kirkman, Lambert, Gilmer, and Foulis) and 0 opposed.



**To:** Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee

**From:** Brian Lieberman, Open Space and Trails Manager

**Date:** February 4, 2025

**Agenda Item:** Committee Officer Elections – Secretary

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**REQUEST:** Staff requests that the Committee nominate and elect a Committee Secretary.

**BACKGROUND:** During the January 2025 OSRAC meeting, Committee members voted to postpone electing a Committee Secretary until the February 2025 meeting due to some absent members.

According to the Committee Bylaws, the Committee Secretary is responsible for taking meeting minutes and other administrative responsibilities as identified by the Chair and Staff. This officer is a 2-year appointment.

Committee members interested in being elected as Committee Officers shall identify themselves during the agenda item at the meeting. Committee members can also nominate others for the appointment. Votes to determine each officer will be verbal. The Committee Secretary will record the results (staff will complete this in the absence of a secretary). The highest-scoring applicant shall be elected as the Officer. Outside of the term limits for all members, there are no limits on each appointment for elected officers identified in the Bylaws.

**ANALYSIS:** None.

**COMMUNITY INPUT:** None required.

**BUDGET/ STAFF IMPACT:** N/A.

**STRATEGIC PLAN(S) ALIGNMENT:** N/A.

**RECOMMEND ACTION OR PROPOSED MOTION:** “Motion to elect \_\_\_\_\_ as the OSRAC Secretary through December 2026.”

**ATTACHMENTS:** The Committee bylaws can be viewed at this link:

[https://www.townofeagle.org/DocumentCenter/View/19059/OSRAC-Bylaws\\_Updated\\_91323?bidId=.](https://www.townofeagle.org/DocumentCenter/View/19059/OSRAC-Bylaws_Updated_91323?bidId=)

More information about the OSRAC can be viewed here: <https://www.townofeagle.org/941/Open-Space-Recreation-Advisory-Committee>.



**To:** Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee

**From:** Brian Lieberman, Open Space and Trails Manager

**Date:** February 4, 2025

**Agenda Item:** Preliminary review and discussion (with the Bureau of Land Management) for a proposal to consider supporting a review of class 1 pedal assist e-bike policies on non-motorized natural surface trails in Town-owned open space properties

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**Request:** Staff requests that the Committee consider feedback from the Town Council concerning a review of the Town's policy for class 1 pedal assist e-bikes on natural surface non-motorized trails in open space properties. Provide guidance to staff and the Town Council on possible processes for evaluating public input and natural resources.

**Background:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO), intends to begin scoping to consider increasing class 1 pedal assist e-bike (e-bike) opportunities on select non-motorized trails within its field office. Scoping will occur through a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA). These assessments generally include public input, stakeholder coordination, and environmental reviews.

The BLM's CRVFO received a request from a regional mountain bike group to evaluate increasing opportunities for e-bikes on non-motorized trails. The proposal is supported by local mountain bike groups including the Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association and the local Eagle mountain bike club, the Hardscrabble Trails Coalition (HTC). As of conversations with the BLM in December 2024, the BLM intends to respond to these requests by evaluating e-bike use on non-motorized trails throughout most of the CRVFO in spring 2025.

However, the BLM says that it will not make any management changes on trails in the Eagle area unless:

- Adjoining land managers and the local community are supportive,
- The NEPA study determines that the changes would have no substantive impacts, and
- Adjacent landowners make changes on lands they manage with connecting trails.

The existing Town of Eagle management approach does not permit e-bikes on non-motorized natural surface trails in open space. The BLM also has the same regulations. To facilitate effective recreation management of e-bikes in the Eagle area, the Town and the BLM would need to evaluate e-bike use together as our trails connect throughout the network.

Staff had a preliminary discussion about the e-bike proposal with the Town Council at the January 14, 2025, meeting. The Council seemed to express general support for evaluating class 1 pedal assist e-bike use on non-motorized natural surface trails in open space properties. The Council did not seem opposed to hiring a consulting firm to assist with public engagement and the review of e-bike use if staff and OSRAC see it as necessary. However, there seemed to be stronger support for staff and OSRAC managing this review internally. There also seemed to be support for evaluating e-bikes in conjunction with the BLM's upcoming review.

**ANALYSIS:** Staff have compiled some options for evaluating class 1 pedal assist e-bike use on non-motorized natural surface trails in open space properties. In addition, staff have included information and links to other open space programs that have already evaluated e-bike use. Ultimately, staff would like to start developing a path forward for this review process.

#### Internal Review Requirements and Considerations

Section 6.04.010 of the Eagle Municipal Code details the procedure for proposing new trails or trail uses on Town open space:

*"Members of the public and recreation user groups who wish to propose a new trail or change the allowed uses on a trail shall request a pre-application meeting with the Town's open space coordinator. The open space coordinator shall determine the extent of the information and application materials needed based on the nature of the proposal. The open space coordinator will then schedule a public hearing with the Town Council to review the proposal. The Town Council shall review the proposal at a public hearing which shall be advertised for a minimum of 15 days prior to the date of the hearing. In addition, property owners within 250 feet of any new trail segment (if applicable) or trail with a proposed change in use shall be sent notice of such hearing by first class mail. Notice of the hearing shall be published in the Town's newspaper of record. At the said hearing, the Town Council shall have the authority to take final action on the proposed construction of a new trail or change in existing trails allowed uses."*

At a minimum, this is the required procedure to change a use designation for trails in town owned open space properties.

The Open Space and Trails Master Plan includes the following recommendations for e-bikes:

- P1 – E-Bikes: *Continue to evaluate e-bike policies on non-motorized trails in the system. The ultimate policy should be consistent system-wide to minimize confusion.*

The Open Space Management Plans also provide some guidance:

- *"Work with Eagle County, BLM, USFS, and other partners to develop a long-term strategy for managing e-MTB access in a manner that is consistent with resource needs and compatible across jurisdictions. This coordination may be a pathway toward allowing e-MTB access to many trails over the long term, but it could also result in continued restrictions or prohibitions."*

In addition, the Management Plans have some recommendations for considering rare and endangered species, cultural resources, wildlife, and sensitive ecosystems before implementing new projects. However, as this proposal does not involve new dirt disturbance or new uses in previously undisturbed areas, these recommendations may not need extensive review.

The Management Plans also summarize other considerations for evaluating e-bikes, including congestion/recreation management, wildlife effects, and sediment/ erosion impacts. These considerations were pulled from relevant studies and analyses completed by a variety of academic

sources, land managers, and other applicable organizations. These summaries are located in the E-bike Policy Paper, which is included as an attachment in the packet.

### E-bikes on Colorado Open Space and Land Management Departments

Many Colorado open space programs and land managers have already evaluated and reviewed e-bike use on non-motorized trails. Below is a quick summary of some relevant groups.

- Jefferson County Open Space
  - Class 1 pedal assist e-bikes are permitted on all trails that already permit bikes.
  - A pilot program informed the new policy.
  - More information: <https://www.jeffco.us/3618/e-bikes>.
- City of Boulder Open Space
  - E-bike use is permitted on certain trails in the system but not all.
  - More information: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/guide/guide-electric-bikes-boulder-open-space>.
- Pitkin County Open Space
  - E-bikes are prohibited on single-track trails within Pitkin County Open Space properties.
  - The BLM is currently engaging with Pitkin County in this same e-bike review process.
- City of Durango Open Space
  - E-bike use is permitted on certain trails in the system but not on most of the trails.
  - More information: <https://durangogov.org/electricbikes>.
- Summit County and Town of Breckenridge Open Space
  - E-bikes are not permitted on any non-motorized natural surface trails
  - More information: [https://www.summitcountyco.gov/services/community\\_development/open\\_space\\_trails/e-bikes.php#:~:text=E%2Dbikes%20are%20not%20permitted,which%20is%20a%20paved%20pathway](https://www.summitcountyco.gov/services/community_development/open_space_trails/e-bikes.php#:~:text=E%2Dbikes%20are%20not%20permitted,which%20is%20a%20paved%20pathway).
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
  - State Parks

Class 1 and 2 e-bikes are allowed on roadways and designated bike lanes and on multi-use trails and other areas (e.g., campgrounds) that are open to non-motorized biking.

- State Wildlife Areas

In State Wildlife Areas, e-bikes are allowed on designated roads and within designated camping or parking areas where motorized vehicles are allowed. They are not allowed in any other areas.

- State Trust Lands

In State Trust Lands, e-bikes are allowed on designated roads and within designated camping or parking areas where motorized vehicles are allowed. They are not allowed in any other areas.

- State of Colorado
  - The Colorado Revised Statutes include the following:

- *Section 42-1-102 (28.5), C.R.S. “Unless otherwise restricted, Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles, and scooters are allowed on the same bicycle and pedestrian paths as conventional bicycles.”*
- *Section 42-4-1412 (14) (a) (I): A person may ride a class 1 or class 2 electrical assisted bicycle on a bike or pedestrian path where bicycles are authorized to travel. (II) A local authority may prohibit the operation of a class 1 or class 2 electrical assisted bicycle on a bike or pedestrian path under its jurisdiction.*

### Some Options for Public Engagement

#### 1. Hire a consulting firm

The Town could hire a consulting firm to handle community engagement and resource analysis. This option could include community surveys, open houses, trail intercept surveys, focus groups, recreation surveys, a literature review of existing studies, and potentially a review of natural resources. The price would vary depending on the amount of engagement expected. It would likely cost \$15,000 - \$30,000+.

Some open space programs hired outside firms to help with the review of e-bikes. However, several programs (particularly larger open space departments) handled the review internally.

#### 2. Internal- High level of community engagement

Staff could handle community engagement and review internally. A high-level engagement approach could include multiple community surveys, open houses, trail intercept surveys, focus groups, a literature review of existing studies, and potentially a review of natural resources.

#### 3. Internal – streamlined scope of community engagement

A streamlined scope of community engagement could include one survey, one open house, one stakeholder meeting, and a consolidation of existing plans and studies for review by OSRAC and the Council.

#### 4. Internal – use existing survey data

The Town has some data from the development of the Open Space Management Plans. The existing data could be used to inform the review and decision-making.

All of this would occur in tandem with the BLM’s NEPA assessment.

**COMMUNITY INPUT:** During the development of the Open Space Management Plans, some community feedback was collected on e-bikes. 799 people participated in the first community engagement survey and 279 during the second engagement opportunity. Over 130 attended an open house, and over 15 stakeholders participated in focus group discussions. The natural resources consulting firm used all of the input to make recommendations to the Town included in the E-bike Policy Paper.

Staff recommends collecting additional community feedback on this topic.

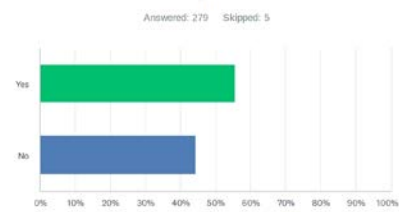
The following are the relevant graphics from the engagement summaries pertaining to e-bikes.

Q8 Do you support increasing E-Bike access on nonmotorized dirt trails on Town open space?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	COUNT
Yes	42.56%	340
No	57.45%	459
TOTAL		799

Q8 In 10 years, do you see yourself supporting more E-bike access in Eagle?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	COUNT
Yes	55.56%	155
No	44.44%	124
TOTAL		279

**BUDGET/ STAFF IMPACT:** If a consulting firm is hired and a high level of community engagement is pursued, the budget could cost \$10,000 - \$30,000+. Engaging a consulting firm would still require a high level of staff time to coordinate and manage the consulting firm.

An internal review of e-bike policies would take a very high level of staff time to complete. Associated costs could include newspaper ad space, design material, and a small open-house budget.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT / STANDARDS ACHIEVED:** The 2022 Open Space and Trails Master Plan includes the following goal:

- P1 – E-Bikes: *Continue to evaluate e-bike policies on non-motorized trails in the system. The ultimate policy should be consistent system-wide to minimize confusion.*

**RECOMMENDED ACTION OR PROPOSED MOTION:** Staff requests that the Committee consider feedback from the Town Council concerning a review of the Town’s policy for class 1 pedal assist e-bikes on natural surface non-motorized trails in open space properties. Provide guidance to staff and the Town Council on possible processes for evaluating public input and natural resources.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- The E-Bike Policy Paper developed during the Open Space Management Plans (attached)
- The Open Space Management Plans can be viewed on the Town website at this link: <https://www.townofeagle.org/113/Open-Space>.
- The Open Space and Trails Master Plan can be viewed on the Town website at this link: <https://www.townofeagle.org/402/2022-Open-Space-and-Trails-Plan>.
- The January 14, 2025, Council meeting recording can be viewed here: <https://eagleco.portal.civicclerk.com/event/2187/media>. The discussion starts at the 1hr 02min mark on the video.

10/31/23

## **Town of Eagle Open Space and Trails**

### **Management Plans**

#### **Issue Discussion: E-MTB Access**

In April 2023, ERO Resources was contracted with the Town of Eagle to develop a set of property management plans for town-owned open space. Based on the recommendations of the 2022 Open Space and Trails Master Plan, the community identified the need for a property-specific inventory of natural resource conditions that could be used to guide management decisions. ERO has developed four management plans for open space properties that provide background and recommendations for a number of issues including vegetation management, wildlife habitat protection, trail maintenance, and restoration/revegetation.

Early in the management process, several complex policy issues arose related to public access and use of open space, including the issue of electronic-assist mountain bike (e-MTB) access on Town open space trails. This memo intends to outline this issue, management options, and management recommendations at a higher level of detail than would be found in a typical property management plan.

### **Background**

The use and demand for access by e-MTBs on natural surface trails is rapidly expanding. This emerging use type has been contentious, based on concerns about physical and environmental impacts, trail system use and conflict, values around physical effort and reward, and overall perceptions of outdoor ethics.

Rules and regulations on public land regarding e-MTB access on public lands vary by land management agency. While some local open space departments and the State of Colorado allow Class 1 (pedal assist) e-MTBs on natural surface trails, many others do not. Currently, the Town of Eagle prohibits e-MTB access on all natural surface non-motorized trails. Likewise, the BLM and US Forest Service prohibit e-MTB access, though policies and procedures are in place to allow access on a localized, case-by-case basis.

### **Issues**

Those who oppose opening trail access to e-MTBs bring a variety of perspectives, which can be generally summarized in the following categories:

- **Trail impacts** – Concern that the higher weight and speed of e-MTBs degrades the trail tread.
- **Environmental impacts** – Concern about additional impacts to vegetation and wildlife resulting from e-MTB use.

- **Congestion and Conflict** – Concern about additional trail congestion resulting from a new type of trail users, more trail users, or individuals traveling further; along with additional conflict resulting from greater speeds and weight of e-MTBs.
- **Outdoor ethics and values** – Concerns and perceptions about outdoor ethics, use of motorized equipment in natural areas, and values around physical effort and reward.

Those who support opening trail access to e-MTBs bring different perspectives, including:

- **Industry Trends** – The bike industry, in general, is trending towards more electronic assist technologies, so it makes sense to embrace some level of access for e-MTBs.
- **Equitable Access** – E-MTBs allow people with different physical abilities to access the open space system and restrictions are unfair to aging or challenged populations.
- **Inevitability** – As technologies evolve, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between e-MTBs and traditional mountain bikes, and e-MTBs will become increasingly common, so it makes sense to allow them.
- **Management Consistency** – It is difficult and confusing for land managers and trail users to distinguish changing access regulations across jurisdictional boundaries, so it make sense to allow e-MTB access on a uniform basis.

Another issue that is typically less evident to community members is the compatibility of e-MTB access with conservation easements on some open space properties. While each easement deed is unique, they often include language that generally prohibits motorized uses that did not anticipate electronic assist mountain bikes when the easement was originally drafted.

Note that numerous community members have also expressed issues and concerns regarding the safety and management of e-bikes on Town bike paths, sidewalks, and streets. Management of those concerns, while valid, are outside the scope of this analysis.

### Community Survey Results

The online community survey posed a direct question about this issue, and allowed for open-ended responses. Based on the survey, a majority (57%) of respondents did not support increasing e-bike access on non-motorized dirt trails on Town open space, while 43% supported e-bike access.

Open-ended responses provided a wider range of opinions, including the following:

- “I love the existing trail system for mountain biking, and class 1 e-bikes should be considered in the same vein as non-motorized mountain bikes.”
- “We should allow e-mountain bike access to the trails, the pedal assist kind. There are many of these on the trails already and do not go that much faster. They allow for people to get out who would not normally. With the trails already popular and well used, they would not cause too much additional strain on the trails.”
- “It is my opinion that e bikes should remain on pavement.”
- “In regards to e-bike access to open space trails, I think that e bikes should only be allowed on trails that directly access BLM land.”

- “Class 1 e-bikes should be allowed on nonmotorized dirt trails.”
- “Protect wildlife and keep out the e-bikes.”
- “E-Bike access is the same as motorcycle access.”
- “Pedal assist (non-throttle) bikes should be allowed on trails. It gives greater access to a broader array of people without making it a fully motorized trail.”
- “E-bikes are here to stay. So make sure you have a clear and innovative policy. Restrict certain trails from and open others for shared use.”
- “I support pedal assist e-bikes. I do not support any other type.”
- “E-bikes will increase wear and tear of trails, from more users or more “laps” being ridden. More maintenance of trails may be required.”
- “BIG NO to EBikes on trails. Please don’t do it!”
- “I support assisted pedal e-bikes. Not throttle. Assisted pedal bikes allow access to those that may have injuries, or age limitations that would not allow them to enjoy the trails and rides with friends and family like a self assisted pedal bike would.”
- “I feel Class 1 e-bikes should be allowed without restriction on all trails. Rider education/etiquette signs may help for those that would otherwise comply but don’t know how to act.”
- “E bikes have motors. Keep them on the motorized trail system and off of the non motorized trail system.”
- “Pedal assist bikes only to be added to trail system. No bikes with throttled. Those are motorized vehicles.”
- “With all the sales of E bikes and people riding them it’s only a matter of time until our trails should be E bike friendly.”
- “E-Bikes are the future. Learn how do best adopt them into the system.”

## Research

ERO conducted a review of the current literature pertaining to the potential impacts of e-MTBs compared to traditional mountain bikes and other outdoor recreation activities. While this is an emerging area of research and the studies pertaining to this topic are limited, some of the common trends and findings may be useful in determining management strategies for e-MTBs.

This review focused on three main topics: physical effects on soil erosion and trail integrity, disturbance and habitat effects on wildlife, congestion and crowding, and existing demographics of e-MTB riders that may influence the extent and magnitude of impacts. This review did not explore topics pertaining to safety, greenhouse gas emissions, perceptions, conflict and etiquette, and other salient topics. Key findings of this review include:

- **Physical Effects** – While research is limited, one study (IMBA 2016) found that difference in impacts on soil displacement and tread disturbance between e-MTBs and traditional mountain bikes was insignificant overall, though e-MTBs did cause greater soil displacement in grade changes and turns (likely due to higher approaching speed and mass).

- **Wildlife and Habitat Effects** – The direct impacts of e-MTBs on wildlife (startling, flushing, or trampling) are similar to traditional mountain bikes and other nonmotorized trail users. However, the greater potential of e-MTB riders to venture further into natural areas more frequently can cumulatively increase wildlife impacts in sensitive backcountry areas over time (Mitterwallner et al. 2021; Chiarenza et al. 2022; Taylor and Knight 2003).
- **Congestion and Crowding** – As e-MTBs enable more people to participate in the sport, there may be an impact from congestion and crowding on popular trails (San Francisco Estuary Institute 2021); however, increases in outdoor recreation and crowding will continue to occur regardless of e-MTB use and managing for total visitation may be more practical and equitable than focusing on a select group of visitors (Boulder County Parks and Open Space 2019).
- **Demographics** – Many e-bike riders are seasoned cyclists who switch to e-bikes as they age to maintain or extend their enjoyment of riding on public lands (Perry and Casey 2020), though the reduced energy and endurance required for e-bikes may enable more people to enjoy the activity, increase the number of people in trail systems, and increase the numbers who reach remote areas (Mitterwallner et al. 2021).

In summary, the existing literature on this topic suggests that the direct impact of e-MTBs on wildlife and the trail itself are similar to traditional mountain bikes. However, the ability of individual e-MTB riders to travel farther with less effort could result in greater cumulative impacts on wildlife and habitat in areas further from trailheads that currently have low levels of human disturbance.

### Management Options

The following options have been proposed and could be considered to manage this issue:

- **Maintain status quo** – No change from existing management – restrict e-MTB access on natural surface trails.
- **Partial Access** – Allow limited Class 1 e-MTB access on a few natural surface trails that are deemed appropriate and/or do not connect to adjacent BLM trails.
- **Expanded Access** – Allow Class 1 e-MTB access on all Town of Eagle trails, with no coordination with adjacent BLM or Eagle County trails.
- **Coordinated Regional Access** – Work with Eagle County, BLM, and other entities to develop a regional, coordinated strategy for e-MTB access on interconnected natural surface trails.

### Recommendation

Based on the emerging science and trends around e-MTB access, the context of Town of Eagle trails and their interface with BLM systems, and the mixed community sentiment around e-MTB access, ERO recommends the following strategies.

#### ***Coordinated Regional Access***

Work with Eagle County, BLM, USFS, and other partners to develop a long-term strategy for managing e-MTB access in a manner that is consistent with resource needs and compatible across jurisdictions. This coordination may be a pathway towards allowing e-MTB access to many trails over the long term, but could also result in continued restrictions or prohibitions.

Development of this strategy would include the following steps:

- Convene collaborative discussions between land managers and key community stakeholders.
- Continue and expand visitor use data collection throughout the system to help assess the potential incremental impacts of e-MTB access.
- Evaluate compatibility of e-MTB access with existing conservation easements, and identify the potential feasibility of easement amendments or other measures to change or clarify the language in a manner that continues to protect the overall conservation values.
- Work with regional partners to develop a coordinated regional e-MTB access strategy, including open and closed areas, timing, and management.
- If e-MTB access is recommended, conduct BLM and USFS NEPA evaluations and approvals of a proposed rule change that would allow e-MTB access.
- Develop and incorporate consistent management, signage, and communications.
- Coordinate ongoing monitoring and enforcement.

Regardless of the outcome, this strategy would take several years to implement, which provides an opportunity for further discussion within the community and monitoring of evolving uses and trends.

This strategy may, over the long term, allow some degree of e-MTB access to trails in and around Eagle (or it may result in long-term prohibitions). Either way, a regional e-MTB access strategy should only occur in a manner that is strategic, transparent, and is coordinated across different land management entities. In contrast, simply opening Town of Eagle trails to e-MTBs without a coordinated regional effort would result in further confusion, violations, conflict and resentment among trail users, and is not recommended.

## References

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