

New Comments Received as of January 19, 2022:

“Hi FAB, in my hasty last email I mistakenly confused the Evergreen Islands environment group with the Evergreen Islands Mountain Bike Alliance. My apologies
That being said, I agree with the letter from Evergreen Islands submitted to the board.
Motorized vehicles belong on motorized trails. “
~Nick Stowe

“E bikes should have to follow the same rules as other motorized devices in the ACFL. E bikes are heavier than regular bikes and tear things up more. I have seen for myself, and have heard from several other citizens, that E bikes are already rolling through even “restricted” areas. The E bikers don’t appear to care, and with no repercussions for going where they want, they will probably continue. That does not make for safe hiking or good trail maintenance.”
~Gene Derig

“I missed the ACFL meeting discussing the use of e-bikes on the trails. Just read about it in the Anacortes American. I am in favor of treating e-bikes with pedal assist in the same category for access to the AFCL as mountain bikes and bicycles. Please don't discriminate against all e-bikes. I am talking about bikes that still need pedalling to move and may be assisted with an electric motor. They are not motorcycles and are even legally classified as bicycles with an assist in Washington state. There is no motor noise. Most people don't go very fast and are considerate to other users. Most e-bikes have less traction than motorcycles or mountain bikes. They can be ridden like any other bicycle without using the assist. E-bikes get people moving again or keep them moving and active, and where to do that better than in the AFCL, away from traffic. My use of the assist is mainly on hills. And I ride a few miles maximum occasionally to mix up the ride to South Fidalgo through the forest. I think that is typical e-bike use of the trails. If there is a concern with speed why not post a speed limit in the forest for everyone. Otherwise I don't even understand the reason behind banning e-bikes. Is it trail damage? Most mountain bikers and motorcycles have more traction and ride greater distances through the forest. I don't think people want to get their expensive e-bike super muddy. So please treat all bicycles the same for access to the ACFL and don't discriminate against e-bikes with assist.
~anonymous

“I'm writing in support of Class-1 EMTB's in the ACFL. I have been riding mountain bikes in the ACFL's for nearly 20 years on a weekly basis and have been a property owner in the City of Anacortes since 2010. The ACFL trails are not your normal forest trails where a hiker, horse and rider or mountain biker can take a leisurely stroll through them since the trail system is full of fairly steep hills. Even for a young fit individual, riding a mountain bike in the ACFL trail system

requires quite a bit of fitness and agility. With the invention of EMTB's, a trail system as you find in ACFL becomes possible to traverse for older or less-fit individuals. It's a matter of access for all. My mountain bike is not an EMTB but someday, as I age, I may want to buy one and use it in the ACFL's as it may be the only way for me to access the trail system on a bike. EMTB's are quiet and are fairly hard to distinguish from a non-EMTB. I ride with an individual who is 77 years old and is riding an EMTB and it's the only way he's able to be out riding in ACFL. One would not even know he's on an EMTB as there is no sound, and we ride together as a group, non-EMTB's with EMTB. There is no more trail damage from his bike than from non-EMTB's riding the ACFL trails or horses or hikers. An EMTB is not a motorcycle!"

~Larry Parfitt

"2 goals are cited by the ACFL Comprehensive Plan: conserving and enhancing the unique environment and habitats within the ACFL, while maintaining recreational activities. Balancing these is a big challenge.

In view of the goals, I offer opposition to E-bikes in the Forest Lands, believing each of the issues cited below will be exacerbated by them:

- * The current allowances of mountain bikes, motorcycles, and E-bikes (under the same restrictions as motorcycles) is disconcerting to me, but the chances of reversal seem remote. It is the quiet and peacefulness of the forest that is disrupted by these vehicles and it can be frightening to encounter them on the predominantly single-user wide trails.
- * It was reported last summer that the forest lands were being loved to death. In the Comprehensive Plan: "Overuse by all trail users is beginning to cause problems: erosion, compaction and trail spreading have increased trail maintenance needs."
- * Unauthorized trails have been created as some users ignore the mandate to 'stay on the trail.'
- * The allowed speed limit of 15 MPH is difficult to enforce. To my knowledge no one carries a radar gun and it is nearly impossible to identify moving offenders as they pass.
- It is hard to believe the weight of bicycles and motorcycles does not contribute to root exposure, gullies, etc. In particular, it is not uncommon to see evidence of braking/sliding on downhill trails. It is stated in the Comprehensive Plan: "Where necessary, rehabilitate trails where horses, motorcycles or mountain bikes have caused erosion or other problems."
- * Riders of mountain bikes pass, with their focus on the trail, not the forest or wildlife. Their enjoyment seems to come from speed and the challenges of navigation, around rocks, tree roots, gullies and people. It is hard to see the Forest Lands used in this way, rather than as a sanctuary, for people and wildlife.

Each of these issues will worsen with E-bikes. Just as we see restrictions on certain activities at Volunteer Park (e.g. no skate boards or bicycles), so too are there limits to what the Forest Lands must offer recreationally to both young and old.

And lastly, regarding the discussion about Class 1 E-bikes. Are E-bikes currently restricted by Class? Would allowance of one Class, lead to allowance of the others? Can the Class of a moving bicycle be identified? Assuming 'no' answers the last question, it seems regulations

may be created that can't be enforced. Let's be good stewards and protect this remarkable environment."

~Tom Flanagan

Written Letter

~Tom Stodeton

"I am an old (80 years) mountain biker, having gone to Moab at least 14 times, finished the BCBR at age 70 with my son. (We were in the 100 year plus class.) I've been biking the Anacortes forest lands for 25 years, and need to increase my biking strength a little. The pedal assist bike is really needed as a boost, not to "pass all the others, but to sort of "keep up". We bikers are good stewards of the trails, often cutting out trees and limbs for trail access for hikers, bikers and horse people. A back pack saw is really handy. I strongly support pedal assist mountain biking."

~Vanoy Smith

"I am writing in support of allowing Class 1 e-bikes to roam the Anacortes forestland bicycle trails. I enjoy the ACFL with my wife and kids and my 80 year old father, both while hiking and while riding bicycles. The split is currently about 90/10 respectively. Part of the reason for minimizing the cycling component is that if I want to have 3 generations of Smiths out on the trail at the same time, the 80 year old has to A) Ride an E-bike without permission or B) Ride, push, and drag his regular bike - without battery assistance. A) creates an internal dilemma of transgressing against rules that exist despite the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). You can imagine how someone born in 1941 feels about this conundrum. If he was born 15 years later, he might have considered this type of civil disobedience acceptable. B) creates a sufferfest not many 80 year olds can tolerate. Although my father can ride an analog (no battery) bike with our group, the physical toll it takes makes it difficult to return within a few days to do it all over again. Falling behind and arriving at the group out of breath and not being able to socialize (90% of the reason to attend group rides with other like minded grayhairs), makes the experience less enjoyable. He used to be on the pointy end of this group. An ebike simply allows him to maintain a place within the group. I think the best method for evaluating the terrors of allowing class 1 ebikes into the ACFL would be to go for a ride with one. Or a jog for that matter. Trail runners are often faster, wear headphones and are sometimes as oblivious to their surroundings as your average California transplant. Shall we penalize them for using too much technology on the trails and for ruining your experience during said 7 second interaction? Follow my old man, or any number of responsible citizens that require some type of pedal assistance while they attempt to continue to recreate as they have all of their lives. Listen to the bikes, watch the tires on the dirt, see if you can tell what makes them different. In the parking lot, a studied eye may see something that is different, which may trigger an immediate

affront to your preconceived notion of good versus evil. Known vs. unknown. Regular bike versus pedal assist bike. Different doesn't make them inappropriate, unacceptable or result in the end of the ACFL as we know it. A class 1 ebike can't make you do anything you didn't used to be able to do. if you used to be a slow unskilled rider, you still will be. My father still has difficulty riding downhill and across technical challenges with momentum. He certainly doesn't ride them at the same speed as his good old days of pure pedal power when he was only 65. And this is with 40 years of experience, having the trails memorized and the individual roots named by those who fell before him, or in front of him. He can't go faster uphill than your average climber. I work as an outpatient physical therapist In Burlington and specialize in anything that gets people active and outdoors. I am a Bikefit professional bicycle fitter and ergonomics expert. I have hiked, biked and raced my way through life to this point. I see future iterations of this as being the eventual mechanism by which I can sustain an active outdoor lifestyle into my geriatric years.

~Voree Smith