

Public Comments Received Prior to February 24th:

“I am writing to express my support to allow E-Mt. Bikes in the ACFL. As a 3rd generation resident of Anacortes, I have seen many changes in this town and have spent countless hours of my life in the forests of Fidalgo Island. When I was a kid, you could ride your motorcycle on any trail you were physically able. Since my youth, I have seen the systematic increase of restrictions to the forest lands. Some of the changes are for the better, some are not. Many of the changes are pushed by newcomers to this town, which is frustrating as a lifetime resident. Wanting to have a voice for the use of my beloved forests and trails, I joined the Fidalgo Trail Riders Association 4 years ago. As an FTR board member and user of the local trail system, I am in full support to allow for the continued use of Electric Mt Bikes on our trails. Most of the users are older and would not otherwise be able to get out and ride the trails. The pedal-assisted power of the E-MTB allows this generation to once again pedal the trails as in their younger years. Many of the E-MTB users are actually devoted to trail maintenance as well and use their environmentally conscious mode of transportation to get them deep into the forest with tools to keep the trails running smooth. I ask, how many of the opposition to E-MTB use actually physically work to help maintain our trails? I would wager very few. Please allow E-MTB use on my trails. “

~Seth Kiser

“Bob, as an outside observer I feel compelled to weigh in on this issue. I do not have a Mountain Bike style E-Bike but have had a city type class 1 E-Bike. I have also been involved with WA Bikes / Cascades for two decades and was on the board when discussions surrounding e-bikes compelled that organization to weigh in. E-Bikes are a new technology, and to aid in their acceptance, the manufacturers have voluntarily built them in three classifications. Class 1 pedal assist, assist speed limited to 20mph; Class 2 throttle assist, speed limited to 20mph but capable of operating without pedal assist, and Class 3, for more powerful e-bikes with speed governed at 28mph, both pedal assist and throttle only. The reason the industry took such pains to separate their offerings into categories was to appeal to jurisdictions and make sure that all e-bikes were not lumped in the same group. WA State has also considered this technology and concluded that for state managed roadways Class 1 e-bikes are considered bicycles, not mopeds or motorcycles. The group that are hoping to gain bicycle status in the forestlands are on the whole older mountainbike riders or trail maintenance workers who need access in order to continue to ride the trails now that they are senior citizens and have lost strength or have joint issues. A great many are not complainers, but really do not want to be relegated to the high powered motorcycle group. The best thing for the ACFL would be to acknowledge this group of trail supporters and give Class 1 e-bikes bicycle status, relegating Class 2 and Class 3 e-bikes to the motorcycle/moped class, with winter restrictions etc. This is a

fair way of looking at the new technology and looking at the group that is hoping to age gracefully and continue supporting and enjoying our incredible community forest resource.

Sincerely,

John Pope

ACFL Trail Patrol (second longest serving member)

PS...remember the advice of the Little Prince: Only enact laws that people want to follow. That makes enforcement by peer groups a powerful tool in the ACFL's favor. And remember the lifeblood of any group effort are the unsung and hardworking volunteers. The list of appellants contain many in the thousand hour club, who have contributed for decades helping the city on the ACFL trails and now need the assist of the Class 1 e-bike to continue that work."

~John Pope

"Attached you will find a statement signed by 110 ACFL users in support of equal access for eMTB's within the ACFL. We would like for this statement to be entered into the public record. My previous 3 letters have been filled with statistics and research for your review. I feel that it's critical for you to have factual data to evaluate in light of all the misinformation that has been sent. Along with the attached document, I would now like to add a more heartfelt and emotional plea. I dearly love my lifelong (63yrs) community and all that it has to offer. In particular, the ACFL which provides me with my spiritual connection. The vehicle I have used for that connection has been a bicycle for the past 40+ years. It is not by choice that I have ended up on an eMTB this past year. I would love to continue riding my non-e MTB but setbacks to my physical health have ended that. It is the relatively new technology of an eMTB that allows me and many others to continue enjoying our forest lands. The facts and data unquestionably show that eMTB's do not have any more impact on our environment or other users than an "analog" MTB. I do not believe it is "*the right thing to do*" to restrict access to those of us who are less-abled than we used to be. We, the longtime users, volunteers and contributors deserve to be able to continue our responsible use of the ACFL. I sincerely hope that the FAB/Staff/City Council agree with this."

[Attachment 1](#)

~Bret Andrich

"Hello. I'm writing to voice my support for allowing Class 1 pedalled eMTBs access to the same trails used by non-motorized pedalled MTBs. As a 60+ rider with years of mountain biking experience, I can say with certainty that allowing the aforementioned eMTBs will allow older residents (and others) an opportunity to extend their active lifestyles. For general health and well-being, it's my opinion that every community should seek a variety of ways to encourage their citizens to stay active."

~Tim Kenyon

“ eBikes = motorcycles... in every sense of the word.

The eMTB proponents are desperately attempting mealy-mouthed re-definitions of certain motorcycles as "something else", some form of bicycle. NO WAY, they are just motorcycles... and they will only evolve with more power & performance... thus able to go faster, further, and more difficult terrain simply due to technology. We all know that's the way tech works. We all are (or will be) going through an electric conversion with our transportation, yes talking cars, cycles, boats, ships, trains, and they are even trying to figure out how to make e-planes... hoorah. EV's can be a good thing, BUT ONLY IF/WHEN they get you out of a gas powered vehicle. However there's nothing inherently stupendous about EV's... they are just another vehicle and just becuz the tech exists for them to navigate trails does not mean they belong there. When I go for a walk or hike in the forest I go to get away from our mechanized civilization. With machines on the trails (incl. mt. bikes), where can I go to get away from our mechanized civilization????? If motorcycles are allowed on ACFL hiking trails, the only recourse will be to strike-out bushwhacking cross-country to ESCAPE. Re. the FAB consulting with a couple city & state park employees... that in no way provides the perspective needed to understand this issue. As hikers typically don't file formal complaints against these insults to their forest experience (short of an accident), only means they aren't the complaining type. As the XC skiers have run away from (and therefore lost) the vast majority of forest roads to escape snow machines, this is what's now at stake with motorcycles on hiking trails. It's already been demonstrated with mountain bikes in National Forest lands... the managers have designated separate trails due to incompatibility between users. Do speak with forest managers who have real experience, not some city/state folks who just want to say there's "no problem".... there IS a problem. That these employees would say there is no noise from electric motorcycles should make it clear they are clueless. Have your experts been "bought" by the RV industry? There's a lot of money behind this push, not just bikers.

But wait, there is no need to even be revisiting this matter.

It's already been determined that motorcycles are incompatible with hikers in the ACFL, and there's already been trails and rules designated to manage them.

There's nothing new here, eMTB's are all truly motorcycles and no spin (haha) can elude that fact.

Simply reiterate ALL motorcycles must use the trails designated for motorcycles.

End of problem.

If they want more trails... then find places THEY can make more."

~Jim Thompson

“It sounds like I need to get this to the city as well! I have brought up the fact that e-bikes are being considered for access to the AFL to several friends who not only are not aware of this issue but also extremely opposed to it! I can't remember if I saw an article in the newspaper?

Thanks,

Sharon Howard

I just read the newsletter and the article about ebikes in the AFL! I didn't even think about that happening as I thought they were for paved surfaces! I only live a block from the forest lands and I have seen the changes over the years from the impact of users in the forest lands some good and some not as good. Multi-use is good of course and trails are labeled for that. But, I think we can all agree that the impact has significantly increased over the years for mountain bike use as technology has improved the device. As a hiker, I have had to move over or off the trail for bikers especially when there is more than one and when they are traveling fast. I also see the impact on trails from the tires and the speed of the user as it is very noticeable. I do agree that labeled trails are needed for each type of user in our forest lands.

I don't think that ebikes should be allowed on any trail/road in our forest lands. But I concede to the same use as dirt bikes on the road type trails. I believe there will be more impact on the trails mostly from increased usage. How could there not be! Riders come from all over to use the forest lands for recreation and adding ebikes will only increase the impact on our trails.

As a long time monetary supporter of the AFL, I have seen many changes over the years mostly among the hikers, horseback riders, and dirt bikes. Then to the mountain bikes, the increased number of users, now to ebikes! What's next I wonder!?! Yikes! Let's appreciate the forest lands for it's beautiful, tranquility, and nature. Some of these users could easily be in another setting that supports their need for speed and navigation skills don't you think?"

~Sharon Howard

"I am writing a second letter to express my support for allowing class 1 e-bikes, increased access in the ACFL. I attended the February FAB meeting and found it very informative. I understand your charter is to assess what impact e-MTB usage would have on the trails. And the primary factors to consider are user volume, speed, weight, and noise. **I hope the FAB and City Council make their decision based on factual evidence and not unfounded assertions or quantity of commenters.**

The evidence I gathered from the two guest speakers at the February FAB meeting and personal experience is:

1. User Volume – e-MTBs do not create a significant increase in the number of trail users. The typical e-MTB rider is a current trail user. A skilled and experienced mountain biker with some type of physical disadvantage using pedal-assist to remain active. E-MTBs are expensive and therefore don't appeal to people who are not already involved in the sport or need the assistance.
2. Speed – The ACFL trails are tight and technical. Bike handling is the limiting factor for speed on most trails, not power. While most e-bike motors provide assistance up to 20

mph, a typical mt bike ride in the ACFL averages 4-6 mph, well within the 15 mph speed limit.

3. Weight – e-bikes are heavier than traditional bikes, but a 10-20lb difference is negligible compared to the combined weight of bicycle and rider.
4. Noise – e-bikes, like electric cars, generate very little audible engine noise.

Bellingham and Washington State have both reported no noticeable change in trail usage, erosion, or user conflicts since they authorized the use of e-bikes on their trail systems. There is no reason to expect a different outcome in Anacortes.”

~Tabb Stringer