

Thursday
March 30, 2017

Rain
45°/39°

Spring Sports
Inside today



Inside Today

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TIMES OBSERVER

Warren, Pa.

www.timesobserver.com

75¢

Readers Speak

in June of 2016 that "it's a trail bike at heart...there is little indicating this e-bike is anything but a typical mountain bike."

Forest Service law enforcement officials too point out that they cannot differentiate motorized mountain bikes from regular mountain bikes. Since it is further known that the use of e-bikes is rapidly growing, it follows that these dangerous machines will be regularly, surreptitiously, used on mountain biking trails, including on trails that are intended to be non-motorized.

Public safety on trails

Dear Editor:

A threat to public safety on our hiking trails - particularly for our vulnerable young children and elderly hikers - has emerged. Motorized mountain bikes, or "e-bikes," have exploded in popularity in recent years in Europe, and the trend is continuing here in the U.S.

"In the last five years the e-mountain bike scene has really taken off across Europe. We're starting to see those same kinds of indicators here in the U.S." -Ken Miner, Director of Sales, Haibike-USA, March, 2016.

Aided by hidden electric motors, e-bikes can reach unnatural and unsafe speeds with relatively little effort (see the January 30th "60 Minutes" story on e-bikes). Alarmed, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have established that e-bikes are to be considered motorized vehicles like motorcycles, ATVs, and snowmobiles, and that they therefore cannot be used on non-motorized trails:

<http://pawild.org/pdfs/EBikesBriefingPaper.pdf>

Unfortunately, it is impossible to distinguish e-bikes from traditional mountain bikes without closely inspecting each machine.

Outside magazine reported

that since any one of them could be an e-bike at any given time, no mountain bikes at all should be permitted on any of the non-motorized trails at Tracy Ridge, rendering the Allegheny National Forest's current proposed Tracy Ridge Mountain Biking On Hiking Trails Project untenable. There are a host of other long-standing reasons why this project should not be implemented, but the e-bike phenomenon alone demands that the project be rescinded and abandoned.

Further, because of the threat to hikers e-bikes represent, it logically follows that no mountain bikes at all should be allowed on any non-motorized trail in the Allegheny. This includes not only the trails at Tracy Ridge, but also the Tanbark Trail, Morrison Trail, and others.

An exception may be the new Jake's Rocks Trail System, which was specifically built and intended for bicycling - hikers would know this going in.

Sincerely,
Kirk Johnson, Executive Director,
Friends of Allegheny Wilderness,
Warren