

ELECTRIC-ASSIST MOUNTAIN BIKES

Trail Etiquette Guidelines

Electric-assist mountain bikes (eMTBs) are similar to traditional mountain bikes, but with a pedal assist.

They can handle natural surface trail terrain and many models offer the same qualities of suspension and responsiveness as traditional mountain bikes.

» WHERE CAN I RIDE MY eMTB?

Although eMTBs are close to traditional mountain bikes, the addition of pedal assist means that land managers may regulate them differently than mountain bikes. For example, although eMTBs are not motorized vehicles in the same vein as a motorcycle, trails designated for non-motorized use are often off-limits to eMTBs.

Local, state and federal eMTB rules and regulations are in flux, and land managers are considering revising access regulations based on a better understanding of eMTB technology, environmental and social considerations, and desired experiences.

Always be a responsible trail user and keep these principles in mind:

- » Generally speaking, any natural-surface trail designated for both motorized and non-motorized use is open to eMTBs. There are more than 300,000 miles of singletrack, doubletrack and natural surface roads accessible to motorized users on public lands.
- » eMTBs may not be allowed on trails managed for non-motorized activities.
- » When in doubt about what uses are allowed, contact the local land manager for clarification. On federal, state and local trails, eMTB access varies significantly.



WHY eMTBS?

- » eMTBs allow increased access to the outdoors for riders of varying skill levels.
- » eMTBs help people ride together.
- » The environmental impacts from Class 1 eMTBs and traditional mountain bicycles are similar.
- » eMTBs make longer distance trail experiences viable by bike and extend the range of trips where a bicycle can be used.
- » eMTBs are emissions-free and low impact, and operate silently.

Want to learn more about e-bikes? Check out all of our resources at PeopleForBikes.org/e-bikes

ELECTRIC-ASSIST MOUNTAIN BIKES: Trail Etiquette Guidelines

WHAT IF I WANT TO RIDE MY eMTB ON A TRAIL THAT SAYS “NO MOTORIZED ACCESS” OR “NO MOTOR VEHICLES”?

- » Do not ride your eMTB in areas where the local rules are unclear. Ride legally and only on authorized trails to show that mountain bikers are all responsible users.
- » Ask your local land manager about access to specific trails.

LAND MANAGER TOOLS

Managing this new category of trail users takes research to help land managers protect decades of trail access victories, meet new desired experiences, and maintain relationships with other trail users. A number of documents exist to help land managers make informed access decisions:

- » Studies, both environmental and social, describing potential impacts that eMTBs can have on natural-surface trails and trail users.
- » A survey of land managers on their experience with eMTBs.
- » A survey of users on their opinions of eMTBs.
- » An inventory of where eMTBs are currently allowed on public lands.

PeopleForBikes continues to collaborate with federal, state and local land managers, the International Mountain Bicycling Association, advocates, riders and other stakeholders to improve understanding of and access for eMTBs.



WHAT CAN I DO TO GET ACCESS TO A TRAIL IN MY AREA?

- » Work with your local advocacy group and ask your local land manager if they would consider opening up a particular trail or section of trail to eMTBs as a test or pilot. Explain that eMTBs are more like traditional mountain bikes than motorcycles and that eMTB riders ride much like regular mountain bikers.
- » Work with the land manager to address concerns, and express that there is a growing constituency of eMTBers in the area that would like to see better access.
- » Arrange a demo for land managers through your local retailer.
- » Contact PeopleForBikes and let us know that you would like better access for eMTBs or if you know of a land manager doing good things for eMTB access.

eMTB RIDING ETIQUETTE

IMBA's “Rules of the Trail” help recreational users get along on shared-use trails. These guidelines are the same for eMTBers as for traditional mountain bikers:

- » **Ride open trails only**
Respect motorized/non-motorized trail use regulations and ask a land manager for clarification if you are uncertain about the status of a trail.
- » **Leave no trace**
When the trail is soft or wet, consider other riding options. Stay on existing trails and don't create new ones. Pack out at least as much as you pack in.
- » **Yield appropriately**
Let your fellow trail users know that you're coming and try to anticipate other trail users as you ride around the corners. eMTBers should yield to all non-motorized users, regardless of the direction they are traveling.
- » **Ride responsibly**
Respect all speed regulations and recommendations, and ride within your limits.
- » **Never scare animals**
An unannounced approach, a sudden movement or a loud noise easily startles animals, including horses and cattle. Give animals enough room and time to adjust to you.
- » **Plan ahead**
Know your equipment, your ability and the area in which you are riding and prepare accordingly.