

Motorized/Nonmotorized Recreation Policy Statement

IMBA is first and foremost an advocate for mountain bikers and the sport of mountain biking. We seek to find solutions that work for a large range of trail users, but our allegiance is to mountain biking. IMBA's secondary focus is building and maintaining sustainable single-track trails. Single-track is the preferred trail of most mountain bikers thus we support actions that improve access and trail conditions and oppose those actions that would degrade the trails and the experience of riding them.

IMBA believes all recreational uses of public lands should be managed on an individual use and trail-by-trail basis through the diligent application of benefits based management, preferred use and environmental impact assessment. These land management principles work together to give people the outdoor experiences they seek in a way that mitigates the effects associated with their use so that future generations can enjoy similar experiences.

FAQ

Q: Is IMBA for or against motorized recreation?

A: Neither, IMBA is an advocate for the interests of mountain biking and the development and maintenance of single-track trails.

IMBA objects to land management practices and principles that address mountain biking and motorized uses as a single class. Mountain biking involves a spectrum of riding styles with a narrow band of environmental impacts that are similar to hiking and equestrian uses. When classification is necessary, mountain biking should be part of the non-motorized class.

IMBA objects to use of the term "mechanized" when describing bicycles because the legal and regulatory definition of this term is unclear. The term Mechanized has needlessly complicated forest planning and travel management. As a result, mountain biking has been managed differently than other non-motorized uses. When referring to only bicycles, materials should simply use bicycles.

IMBA also objects to the use of double track devices on single track trails because they widen the trail. Widening the trail pushes the trail beyond its engineering and can lead to trail degradation. Widening the trail also diminishes the single track experience.

Q: Does IMBA work with motorized recreation groups on advocacy issues?

A: IMBA is happy to partner with many different interest groups to develop win-win solutions. However, on some issues the interests of mountain bikers and motorized users are aligned, on other issues they are not. In all cases, IMBA will advocate solutions best for mountain bikers.

Q: How does IMBA view electric assist and electric bicycles (e-Bikes)?

A: Electric bicycles are a welcome addition to the cycling community. They allow for carrying heavy loads and offer assistance to those who could not otherwise experience much of the fun of cycling and add a de minimus amount of additional impact. However, the use of a motor whether internal combustion or electric would require changing the classification to a motorized use. IMBA would support the use of e-Bikes anywhere that we could also support other motorized uses.

Q: Are there existing rules and regulations for electric bicycles?

A: The European government is out front with regard to the classification and [regulation of electric bicycles](#). Under EU rules, the legal status of electric bicycles adheres to a regulatory framework related to power output, (whether pedal assist or powered by an auxiliary electric motor), speed, battery type and machinery related to consumer safety. Under current EU rules, if an e-Bike's power and speed exceed limits of .25 kW (250 Watts) or 25 km/hour (15.5 miles/hour), it is then classified as a Moped and would have additional regulations for insurance, licensing/registration, helmets, driver's licenses and age requirements. The EU rules do not specify on or off-road use of e-Bikes.

Q: How do other national mountain biking organization's view e-Bikes?

A: IMBA's informal poll of its affiliates in Europe, Australia, Canada, and South Africa were unanimous in agreement that e-Bikes are motorized and therefore when utilized off-road should be regulated as with other motorized off-road travel.

Q: Should IMBA take the lead to help governments regulate off-road e-Bikes?

A: An organization (the [International Light Electric Vehicle Association](#)) currently exists for the purpose of promoting industry standards as well as favorable government rules and regulations for e-Bikes. IMBA may seek to partner with industry and other organizations to influence how e-Bikes are managed in order to advocate for what's best for mountain biking.