



Parks & Open Space

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PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, March 24, 2022

Location: Virtual Meeting

TO:	Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
FROM:	Tina Nielsen, Special Projects Manager
AGENDA ITEM:	E-bikes on County Open Space Update
ACTION REQUESTED:	Information Only

Background

Boulder County adopted a policy to allow Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes on selected trails in the plains in November 2019, following a two-year public engagement process and a pilot study. The county's [e-bike web page](#) shows where e-bikes are allowed along with background on the public process and related information.

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the county's experience with e-bikes since the policy was adopted.

Law enforcement

Rangers and other staff keep records of tickets and incidents:

- Zero accidents involving e-bikes have been reported, however accidents are usually not reported to the county unless there is serious injury.
- The county issued one ticket for illegal e-biking. The ticket was issued at Heil Valley Ranch in 2020 (the rider did not claim a mobility disability).

Visitor Study

The Five Year Visitor Study was conducted at county parks last year (delayed from 2020 to 2021 due to the pandemic). This ongoing survey documents visitor demographics and satisfaction; the survey will be implemented on regional trails this year. Michelle Marotti is scheduled to present a summary of results to POSAC in April, and she pulled these data from the survey results:

- 1% (17 respondents) indicated using an e-bike as one of the activities they participated in at the park. The respondents who rode e-bikes were surveyed at Carolyn Holmberg Preserve (6), Pella Crossing (3), Legion Park (2), Lagerman (2), Heil Valley Ranch (2), and Hall Ranch (2). Twelve of those respondents indicated the e-bike was their primary activity.
 - *NOTE: e-bikes are not currently allowed on foothill and mountain trails with an exception for riders with mobility disabilities. We don't know if the users who responded riding e-bikes at Heil Valley Ranch and Hall Ranch were illegal or had mobility disabilities.*
- Overall, 3% of all respondents indicated experiencing conflict on the day of their survey. Although many conflicts were mentioned with bikes and sharing the trail, only one comment from the Coalton Trailhead called out "electric bikes" as a conflict.

Ongoing public engagement

- Staff receive emails or calls every one- to two months. Most of these messages are requests for clarification of our regs; on occasion there is a request for more e-bike access on foothill and mountain trails. The county also receives inquiries from agencies across Colorado and the country from public agencies delving into e-bike regulations.
- Staff are in touch with City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Park staff regarding the county's desire to streamline e-bike regulations on the LoBo trail as well as encouraging them to look at allowing e-bikes on the Boulder Canyon Trail. OSMP staff recently indicated that a review of e-bike regulations is on their work plan this year.

Conclusion

Based on this information, the county believes that e-bikes are not causing significant issues on our open space trails. After next year's Visitor Use Study at regional trails, we may have more information to share.