

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Statutory Authority: 7 Delaware Code, Section 4701(a)(4) (7 Del.C. §4701(a)(4))

7 DE Admin. Code 9201

PROPOSED

PUBLIC NOTICE

9201 Regulations Governing State Parks

I write in connection with proposed amendments to regulations governing state parks, particularly with respect to the proposed regulation of e-bikes, and essentially in support of the proposals.

It is hard to imagine anyone has observed more bicycles on the Junction & Breakwater Trail than my wife and I. The trail goes along two sides of our property, and every morning and afternoon we sit in our sunroom and watch the walkers, runners and riders go by. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of bicycles have passed by (I once counted 1066 in one day). My wife has walked 9000 miles (really!) along the trail, every day encountering many riders, and has been sideswiped and mildly injured twice; I have walked or ridden a mere 2500 miles.

Here are our observations about bikes on the J&B trail. 25-35 percent of riders on the trail are e-bikers, mostly pedal-assist Class 1 and 2 used by senior and other adults. The majority of all riders go along at a reasonable pace, less than 10 mph. Even with assist, it's hard to make a Class 1 or 2 e-bike reach its maximum speed of 20 mph. BUT, there are two cohorts of riders that abuse the trail by going too fast and putting themselves and other users in danger. First, riders, especially juveniles, of Class 4 (unrestricted) e-bikes that mimic small motorcycles – everyone has seen them zip by on their wide tires and heavy frames, kicking up gravel (and often sans helmet and/or shoes, phone in hand). Although technically not “bicycles,” they are common on the trail, and clearly going faster than 20mph. The second group I'll call the “spandex gangs” of one to 20 riders speeding down the trail on standard bicycles as if trying to win the Tour de France, often two abreast and without warning, not regulated at all except as to the speed limit.

New Jersey has recently enacted state-wide rules requiring ALL e-bikes be registered, and prohibiting people under 16 and requiring insurance on Class 3 e-bikes. In my opinion this would be too severe in Delaware's state parks.

The proposed new state park regulations seem to get a lot of it right by prohibiting Class 4 e-bikes on park trails, and imposing a speed limit of 15 mph.

Thank you, and see you on the trail!

Gary 