[redacted]

Subject: State Park Trail Comments
Date: Saturday, August 1, 2026 at 2:03:10 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: James M[redacted]
To: HearingComments, DNREC (MailBox Resources)
Attachments: image.png

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment about Delaware State Parks. I want to limit my comments to a concern I have about the use of ebikes in state parks and, by expansion, on public lands. There is no doubt that ebikes offer opportunities, for example older people with physical limitations to ride and access more areas of parks and public lands. They are a means for low-impact enjoyment of the outdoors. With the increase in ebike sales there is no doubt that in the near future more people will utilize them in state-owned lands (see graph below).

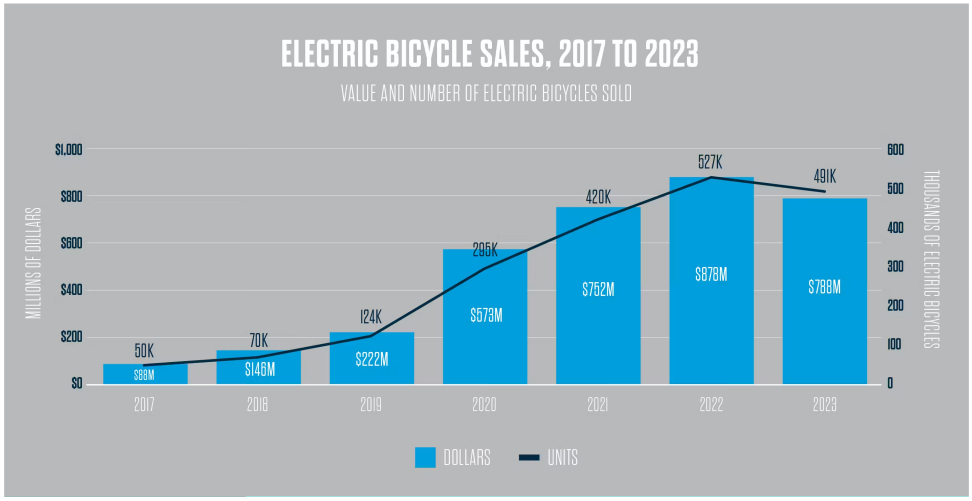
However, I believe we are on the cusp of significant changes in state park land use patterns that call for discussion and deliberation about what is ultimately best for users of all user types and what is best for these natural resources.

Based on my readings, I have listed a few of my concerns below.

Research has shown that ebike use has increased on public lands (Chiarenza et al., 2022) with the potential for impact on trails and soils, vegetation trampling, dissemination of invasive seeds and pathogens, and wildlife disturbance. Additionally, increased ebike use on trails will impact the experience of these spaces on other user groups such as hikers and equestrians.

Ways in which e-bikes could differ from regular bikes include uphill speed, distance traveled per ride, demographics of riders, potential fire risk, and noise impacts to wildlife, specifically bats.

Safety - speed concerns: E-bike related injuries were more than three times as likely to involve a collision with a pedestrian than either pedal bicycles or powered scooters.
Overcrowding: Further research is needed to determine if trail design standards need to be modified to accommodate the unique characteristics of e-bikes.
Reckless behavior: E-bikes provided by rental companies may encourage use by novice riders with poor trail etiquette and who are unfamiliar with e-bike operation and safety.
Erosion:Less bikes = less damage;
Trail damage: E-bikes allow people to ride more miles and/or over a longer period, increasing potential benefits and impacts of bicycle use in public lands.



https://www.peopleforbikes.org/news/electric-bicycle-market-insights-2024

Suggestions:
1. Survey park and trail users about their experiences and opinions regarding ebikes on trails and public lands.
2. Limit ebike usage to improved and surfaced/paved trails.
3. Offer tiered fee-based usage agreements to allow those who participate in training sessions access to designated natural trails. These agreements should be renewed annually.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment about use of Delaware State Park Lands.

References

Chiarenza, J., Berg, I., Ledvina, K., Rodriguez, M., & Young, J. (2024). Future of E-Bikes on Public Lands: A Human Factors Field Study at Minute Man National Historical Park. *Transportation Research Record*, *2678*(10), 403-418.

https://nwtconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-NWTC-Session-6b-English-Young1.pdf

https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/future-ebikes-federal-lands-research-synthesis.pdf

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Jim M[redacted]