

Dear members of the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society,

For the past several years, the KCTS has maintained a no motor-assisted mountain bike (“e-Bike”) policy. With many manufacturers now offering e-Bikes, the popularity has grown exponentially world-wide. While this growth is primarily in Europe where the regulations and liability regarding electric-assist bikes are more lenient, it has created significant challenges in the U.S., Canada and British Columbia. We are writing to you to reaffirm the reasons why e-Bikes are not permitted on KCTS trails.

First, KCTS policy states, maintaining the non-motorized status of the KCTS trail network:

1. Enables access to lands for trails that would not otherwise be possible.
2. Enables compliance with the terms of our liability insurance.
3. Enhances the experience and safety of current users, and facilitates a degree of multi-use compatibility that would otherwise be compromised.

To elaborate on these distinctions, access to lands for trails is obviously a top priority for the KCTS. We administer 30 individual land use agreements on our trail network. Each of these agreements is unique. Renegotiating these complex agreements would result in variable responses, including landowners outright refusing motorized use on their property. It is the KCTS Board’s perspective that the risk of compromising access for the many to serve the few would be a disservice.

The question of liability is an important one. The KCTS has developed and managed our trail network for more than 20 years based on the premise of non-motorized recreation. The insurance policy we have to protect both the KCTS and landowners with whom we have an agreement is based primarily on this non-motorized premise. Renegotiating our insurance policy could result in significant challenges for the society and compromise agreements with landowners, not to mention additional expense.

Provincial regulations regarding the use of e-Bikes on Crown Land is expected very soon. We have received word from land managers that British Columbia will be limiting e-Bikes on all Section 56 and 57 trails (designated non-motorized), which includes all KCTS trails on Crown Land. We will have no other option than to comply with these regulations. In recent weeks, Washington State announced similar limitations.

Note, this limitation only applies to official KCTS trails and does not apply to urban trails unless specified by the municipality (we are not aware of any current restrictions in the Lower Columbia region), the Rail Grade or the Wagon Road between Rossland and Warfield.

We ask that KCTS members and local and visiting trail users respect our non-motorized trail policy for the above reasons. Any questions or concerns can be directed to info@kcts.ca.

Thank you,

KCTS Board of Directors