

October 13, 2025

To whom it may concern,

The SC Forestry Commission contracted with Priority Metrics Group to conduct an evaluation of the potential expansion of e-bike use on recreational trails within our state forests. We recognize the increasing population of e-bike users. The SCFC strives to balance working forest with appropriate recreation.

E-bikes are largely defined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission as bicycles. E-bikes have been classified by PeopleForBikes as Class 1, 2, and 3. Class 1 e-bikes are pedal-assist, no throttle, max speed of 20 mph. Class 2 e-bikes are pedal-assist, have throttles, max speed of 20 mph. Class 3 e-bikes are pedal-assist, no throttle, max speed of 28 mph. The state of SC has Statute 56-1-10(29) which defines an “electric-assist bicycle.”

Priority Metrics Group focused their research on three impact areas: Environmental Impacts, Safety Impacts, and Social Impacts. The overall findings and recommendations of the study is that Class 1 e-bikes are similar to analog bikes and should be regulated similarly. Class 2 and 3 e-bikes may introduce issues into the system for other user groups, such as unsafe speeds, unsafe behavior, and trail erosion. Most trails safe for mountain biking are safe for Class 1 e-bikes, however trails with steep or technical ascents, narrow bidirectional pathing, blind turns, or other features that could create issues at greater speeds should be reviewed. The study recommends focusing on user behavior as opposed to regulating bike class.

Going forward, the SCFC will make provisions to allow “electric-assist bicycles” as defined in SC Statute 56-1-10(29) everywhere traditional bicycles are permitted on state forests. SCFC will update regulations and make them consistent across properties and publications. Trail systems will be evaluated for safety and environmental sensitivity, and some routes may be designated for foot-traffic-only. Recreational use policies will continue to be reassessed as conditions evolve.

Sincerely,



James Douglas,
State Lands Coordinator

OUR MISSION

Protect, promote and enhance South Carolina's forests for the benefit of all.

OUR VISION

Healthy forests, resilient communities, impeccable service