



# County Trails and E-Bike Information Session

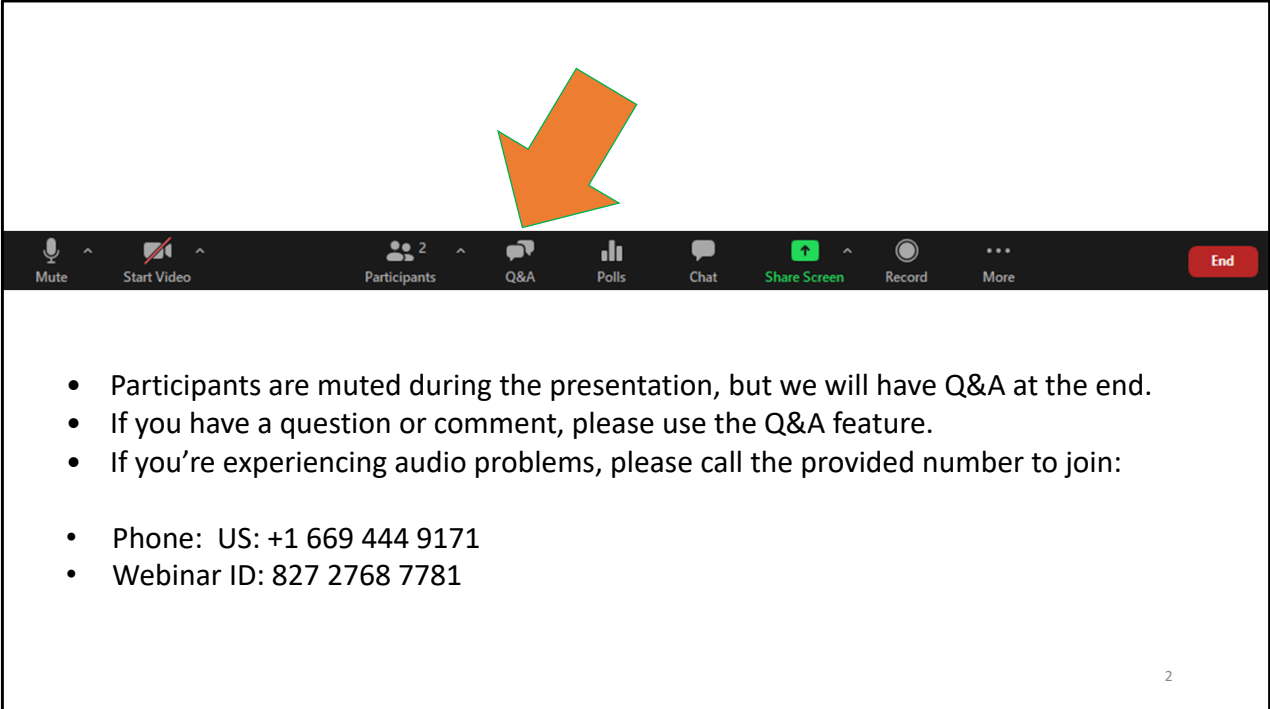
Presented by:

**Dave Knopp, Chief of North Operations**  
**County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation**

**Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2022**

Welcome to the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation's public meeting on County Trails and Electronic Bikes.

This presentation is being made by Dave Knopp, Chief of North Operations for the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation

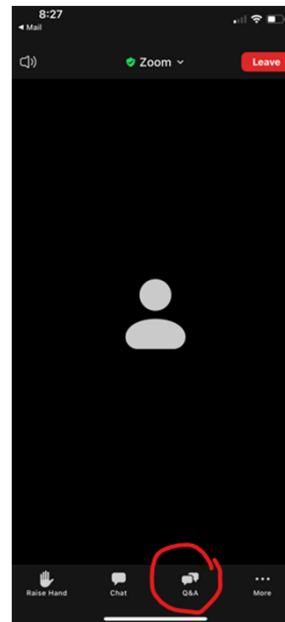


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Tonight, I am going to share a lot of information with you on the evolution of electronic bikes and their use on County trails. I will also share examples of what other federal, state and local agencies are permitting with regard to electronic bikes on trails. Then, we will open this up to Q&A.

We'll be covering a lot of acronyms, so I will do my best to explain them as we go, for example, DPR stands for

the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation.

# Agenda

- DPR Trail Philosophy
- 2015 California Assembly Bill 1096
  - e-Bike classifications
- 2022 Assembly Bill 1909
- Senate Bill 375
- Agency Interpretations
- Benefits and Concerns
- The Future of e-Bikes
- Q&A



# Meet Your Hosts

## County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR):

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- Dave Knopp, Operations Chief
- Jessica Geiszler, Marketing & Public Outreach Manager
- Lizzy Bendrick, Trails Program Manager, Resource Management



With me tonight is Lizzy Bendrick Trails Program Manager for our Resource Management Division and Jessica Geiszler, our Marketing and Public Outreach Manager.

## DPR Trail Philosophy

DPR has an obligation to provide public access to County-owned and managed lands while protecting and preserving biological and cultural (including historical) resources. The use of trails fosters a greater appreciation for the environment, encourages continued public support of preserve lands, and improves physical and mental health.



DPR manages 156 parks, including open space preserves, campgrounds, regional and local parks - and recreation centers, teen centers and sports complexes. The properties we manage have over 384 miles of developed trails across some 56,000 acres of land – serving both residents of, and visitors to, our region.

A big part of tonight is **DPR Trail Philosophy**. DPR has an obligation to provide public access to County-owned and managed lands while protecting and preserving biological and cultural resources, including historical resources. The use of trails fosters a greater appreciation for the environment, encourages continued public support of preserve lands, and improves physical and mental health. I share this because DPRs goal for this event and in the parks is safe use of trails for all users to enjoy and appreciate the beauty of the natural resources around us.



Trails are an integral part of our educational programming. We host:

- Introductory courses like Hiking and Backpacking 101
- Expert led mountain-biking trips
- Permitted fall hikes at Old Survey Road 97 in Ramona, see our website for hiking, horse riding or biking this beautiful trail to get the free permit. Fall Weekends only, with a limit of 50 trail users per day
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Hike up Volcan Mountain to see County wide fireworks
- A bi-annual Warrior Hike Challenge honoring retired and active-duty military personnel which take place at El Capitan Preserve on Memorial Day Weekend and Veteran's Day Weekend
- Even bird-watching excursions

There are a lot of different types of activities that take place on our trails, and one of the biggest things we teach is to recreate responsibly and to use good trail etiquette – respecting other trail visitors regardless of their mode of transportation.

2015  
California  
Assembly  
Bill 1096  
Vehicles:  
Electric  
Bikes

In Simple Terms:  
E-Bikes are now Non-Motorized Bicycles



Here is some pertinent information on Electric Bike History in California. In 2015 the State of California passed Assembly Bill 1096. This bill defined “electric bicycles” as bicycles equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts. They ran about \$4K per bike. Use on County Trails started slowly... The bill called out three classes of electric bicycles.

## California Assembly Bill 1096, 1909 The Inclusion of Class 3 E-Bikes

<b>CLASS 1</b>	Pedal Assist System (PAS)	Motor Powered Speed Limit (MPSL) 20 MPH
<b>CLASS 2</b>	PAS and Throttle Element	MPSL 20 MPH
<b>CLASS 3</b>	PAS	MPSL 28 MPH



The legislation prohibited the operation of a Class 3 e-bikes except on specified paths, lanes or trails, unless authorized by a local ordinance. DPR did not authorize their use on DPR Trails.

Class 1 & 2 E-Bikes are classified by this legislation as “bicycles” and were given access to trails where traditional bicycles are allowed. These bikes must have a classification number label that is permanently affixed, in a prominent location, on each bike, as required by the State of California.

To prohibit their use, a new action would need to be taken by the local authority. For trails in DPR parks and preserves, the County of San Diego regulations give that authority to the DPR Director to restrict trail use for safety and maintenance concerns. If the electronic machine is powered by an electric motor of more than 750 watts or does not have pedals or can exceed 28 MPH while using the electric motor, it is not one of these three classes, it is not covered by the California legislation, and it is not eligible for use on DPR trails.



## Introducing Assembly Bill 1909

Class 3 e-Bikes  
allowed at  
State level

Jurisdictions  
may continue  
to determine  
policy locally

In September 2022, the State of California passed Assembly Bill 1909. This bill removes the prohibition of Class 3 E-Bikes that previously existed under AB 1096 (2015) for use on bicycle paths or trails, bikeways, bicycle lanes, or hiking or recreational trails ***unless prohibited by a local authority***. These state actions seem to be focused on climate action planning and opening pathways/trails to commuters, but they do impact trail use.

The Bill allows agencies to prohibit the operation of e-Bikes on bicycle paths and trails within their jurisdiction. The recent bill has DPR reviewing trail uses and customers to determine the future policy. For now, Class 3 E-Bikes are prohibited on DPR Trails. They are allowed on paved vehicle roads.

# Senate Bill 375



In addition:

The State wants to support the purchase of E-Bikes to support that Climate Action Plan. Senate Bill 375 provides funding for \$10 million from the State General Fund to provide financial incentives for purchasing electric bicycles. The project is now called the Electric Bicycle Incentive Project and administered through the California Air Resources Board. The project will increase access to clean transportation options while offsetting vehicle miles traveled by incentivizing electric bicycles. A portion of project funds will support the development and administration of a virtual bike safety class. The project will provide incentives for eligible e-bikes to income qualified consumers at the time of purchase, on a first come, first-served basis.



There are many Land Managers/Government Agencies who set the regulations for the trails they manage.

For example:

- U.S. Forest Service lands, like Cleveland National Forest, treat e-Bikes of ALL classes as motorized vehicles and thus can only go where a motorcycle would be permitted. Basically, no trail use... Though you may see e-Bikes permitted on U.S. Forest Service Lands *outside of San Diego* as pilot programs.
- California State Parks may allow Class 1 E-Bikes on unpaved trails if designated by a Superintendent Order. For San Diego, the Torrey Pines State Park trails do not allow bicycles of any kind on the trails.
- City of San Diego allows Class 1 & 2 E-Bikes on trails where a traditional bicycle is allowed, unless otherwise posted. City of San Diego Trails where E-Bikes are allowed include Mission Trails and Los Penasquitos Canyon.
- You may have seen in the past few months that the City of Carlsbad created new bicycle rules, including on trails, in response to a large increase in bicycle involved accidents. Their rules include the requirement for all bicycle users on trails that are less than 5 feet wide, basically a single track trail, to stop and walk their bike when they are within 50 feet of a pedestrian or horseback rider.

In 2019, DPR implemented a 2-year study on the use of E-Bikes on DPR trails and closed several trails to E-Bikes based on safety and maintenance concerns, including campgrounds and parks where trails are narrow with a high number of casual walkers. As part of the study, evaluations were conducted periodically and included meeting with other recreational land managers to discuss the challenges and success stories related to E-Bikes on trails, documenting incidents, and touch points with trail advocates and user groups. Based on the feedback received and lessons learned we are exploring some additional trails for E-Bike use.

Currently, class 1 & 2 E-Bikes are permitted on all County paved areas and trails where traditional bikes are permitted, unless specifically restricted by DPR for Safety and Maintenance Concerns. There are currently 18 parks with trails where Class 1 & 2 E-Bikes are prohibited. Signs are posted at trailheads where these bicycles are permitted and prohibited.

We realize this is a lot of information to take in at one time. Our e-Bike policy, which includes the list of parks where e-bikes are permitted and prohibited, can be found on our website, [www.sdparks.org](http://www.sdparks.org).



Here's a good informational sales video from TREK bikes. **<to the 1:48 point>** I am showing part of this because it does a good job explaining the benefits of E-Bikes.

It hits on the equal access; the ability to still pedal but receive assistance for people with lower physical ability to work out and go places. This can open our trails to more people.

## Video Recap



Dave Knopp, [Dave.Knopp@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Dave.Knopp@sdcounty.ca.gov)  
**[sdparks.org](http://sdparks.org)**

As a disclaimer, this video is from a company selling e-Bikes. But it does a good job of sharing the benefits of e-Bikes, especially if they are used correctly.

There are also videos of improper use of e-Bikes which result in serious accidents involving not just the cyclist but also horse riders and hikers. These two pictures of electric vehicles not covered under the recent California legislation, but they are out there and have to be dealt with. Something that causes trail managers to lose sleep. Proper use is key. Riding – even running - high speeds, or going off trail into blind areas where visibility is compromised is both dangerous and irresponsible.

There are reasons for the rules that have been put into place. Respect those rules for your safety and the safety of other trail users. We will continue to explore new ways to expand recreation opportunities in parks and along our trail systems.



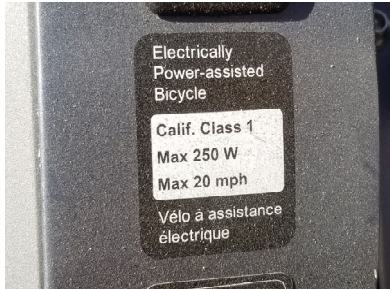
## Benefits and Concerns

E-Bikes are quiet, and a lack of trail etiquette can lead to accidents and even injuries. When approaching hikers and horse riders, let them know you are coming. Use a bike bell. There are some great tips on our website, [sdparcs.org](http://sdparcs.org), including a video on trail etiquette called “Share and Be Aware” (see next slide).

Remember the beginning of the presentation and DPR’s Trail Philosophy, which is to foster a greater appreciation of the environment? Some agencies have speed limits, and I mentioned Carlsbad’s bike walking requirement. We do not have speed measuring devices on trails. Our primary focus is on creating awareness and to providing a better explanation of what constitutes safe trail use.

Besides technology providing more opportunities for people to use trails and enjoy the great outdoors, there are environmental benefits associated with providing non-gas-powered ways to travel, just like we see in electric cars. DPR staff are using e-Bikes to patrol trails, open spaces, campgrounds and parks. This reduces our use of gas-powered vehicles, provides for more frequent and less impactful patrols of DPR trails, in addition to assisting with emergency response at difficult-to-reach locations. This form of response is also quieter which allows park users to enjoy the sounds of nature. DPR is in the process of adding e-Bike patrols to 10 regional parks/open space

preserves this year. You can currently see DPR staff patrolling Sycamore Canyon and Wilderness Gardens County Preserves on E-Bikes.



## E-Bikes on DPR Trails TODAY and TOMORROW

Dave Knopp, [Dave.Knopp@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Dave.Knopp@sdcounty.ca.gov)  
[sdparks.org](http://sdparks.org)

Technology can have benefits that come with challenges. The passenger vehicle market has gone "boom" with electric cars and pick-up trucks, but the need for charging stations is racing to catch up with that need.

E-Bikes are taking a large portion of overall bike sales with reports that they make up 20% to 40% of bikes sales. Harley Davidson makes an electronic powered bike with Class 1 speed assistance. Target and Costco even sell them at fairly low prices.

The demand is there but industry is still catching up, which is why we will continue to see changes in laws and policies affecting e-bike use, at all levels of government. DPR continues to study the current use of E-Bikes on trails, while tracking changing E-Bike technology and State and Federal Legislation which impacts their use. As I stated earlier, you can find our e-Bike Policy on our website at [www.sdparks.org](http://www.sdparks.org).

DPR will be hosting an in-person meeting on this same topic in January. You are invited to join us again to discuss e-Bikes on DPR trails. Meeting details will be posted to the website soon.

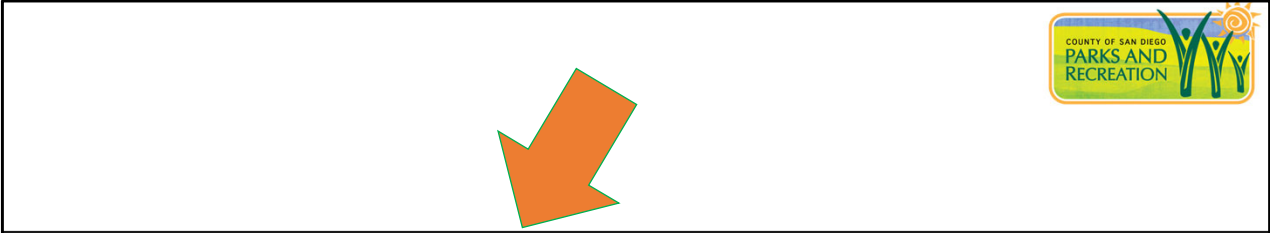
You can discuss e-Bikes and DPR trails with any of our Park Rangers, anytime, and

you can also email me at [dave.knopp@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:dave.knopp@sdcounty.ca.gov).

[Trail Etiquette - Share and Be Aware - YouTube](#)

**Trail Etiquette is key.** Here is a video on Trail Etiquette, produced by our team with help from a variety of trail users, including hikers, walkers with dogs, equestrians and mountain bikers.

Afterward, we are going to open this up to Q&A, which will be led by Marketing & Public Outreach Manger, Jessica Geiszler.



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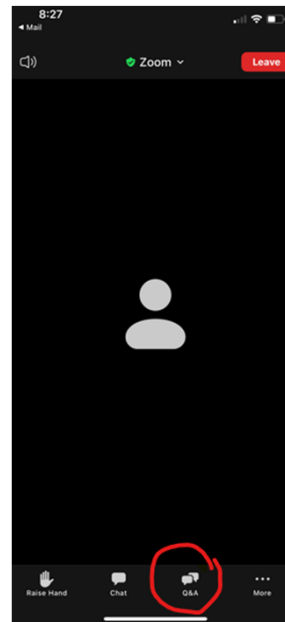
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# County Trails and E-Bike Information Session Q & A