

Minnewaska State Park Preserve

Policy for the Operation of E-Bikes on Carriage Roads

Background

On June 17, 2019, The New York State Legislature approved a bill to lift state-level restrictions on motorized scooters and bicycles that can be propelled by electric motors, while retaining local jurisdiction ability to ban their use (Senate Bill S5294A). The bill awaiting gubernatorial approval. Existing NY State laws and various municipal laws either prohibit the use of both electronic bikes and electronic scooters (E-bikes/E-scooters) under motorized vehicle provisions or they do not have specific policies to address this new technology, even though both E-bikes and e-scooters are legal to purchase.

Under current New York State Law*, E-bikes are classified as "motor driven bicycles" and are subject to the registration, licensing and insurance requirements that apply to motor vehicles. However, New York's Department of Motor Vehicles does not recognize E-bikes as vehicles with these requirements and has no system for supplying registration and licensing. Therefore, the New York Department of Motor Vehicles asserts that riding an electric bicycle on any street, highway, parking lot, sidewalk, or other area that is open to public motor vehicle traffic in New York State is illegal.

The use of E-bikes in New York City is governed by city laws. Under existing city ordinances and regulations, Class I electric assisted bicycles that can travel up to 20 MPH and require the operator to be pedaling are treated as bicycles under city law. Other electric bicycles are treated as "motorized scooters" and may not be ridden within the city. A number of other states surrounding New York (e.g. Pennsylvania, Connecticut) have already approved the use of Class I in any places regular bicycles are permitted.

Fully motorized E-bikes (i.e. throttle assist) do not require any input from the rider, the rider just turns the throttle and off they go. But, pedal assist E-bikes are designed to mimic the natural motion of the rider is used to feeling when riding a bicycle. As the rider pedals the bike, a sensor is activated, which then generates power from the motor. The power is activated only when the rider pedals with the motor turned on, and the amount of power is determined by the pedal assist level that is chosen.

Class I electric bicycles are designed to be as safe as traditional bicycles, do not compromise consumer safety, and benefit bicyclists who may be discouraged from riding a traditional bicycle due to limited physical fitness, age, disability or convenience. E-bikes can also encourage people to take bike trips and to ride longer than on regular bikes. Because they're easier to ride, and they're ideal for older adults and for individuals with physical limitations.

Demand and market forces have made these bikes more affordable and accessible to the consumer. With the completion of the extension of the Empire State Trail from Poughkeepsie through New Paltz, the completion of the River-to-Ridge trail, and the increasing affordability of the bikes, the presence of E-bikes on the Park Preserve has been quickly growing. The Park Preserve has also seen an increase in inquiries regarding the Preserve's policies.

In order to reduce the barriers to bicycling at Minnewaska State Park Preserve, the following policy has been developed to permit cyclists to operate Class I E-bikes only on Carriage Roads where traditional “pedal” biking is permitted.

* The following New York laws are referenced: N.Y. Veh. & Traf. Law §§ 102, 123; N.Y. City Admin. Code §§ 19-176, 19-176.2, 20-762; Rules of the City of New York, Title 34, Chapter 4, Sections 4-01(b), 4-12(p)(5); see also “Motorized devices that cannot be registered in New York,” New York Department of Motor Vehicles (available at: <https://dmv.ny.gov/registration/motorized-devices-cannot-be-registered-new-york>).

“E-bike” Definition:

Federal law defines a low-speed electric bicycle as: “A two- or three-wheeled vehicle with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts (1 h.p.), whose maximum speed on a paved level surface, when powered solely by such a motor while ridden by an operator who weighs 170 pounds, is less than 20 mph.” The federal law permits E-bikes to be powered by the motor alone (a “throttle-assist” E-bike), or by a combination of motor and human power (a “pedal-assist” E-bike). (15 U.S. Code § 2085)

E-Bike Classification System:

The bicycle industry has created Class 1, 2, and 3 designations for Low Speed Electric Bicycles (LSEBs) to clarify and describe their respective capabilities, and to support the enactment of appropriate legislation and regulations regarding LSEB equipment and usage on transportation and recreational facilities.

Class 1, 2 and 3 LSEBs are classified as “electric bicycles” by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and regulated by that agency under 16 C.F.R. Section 1512.

Class 1 electric bicycle: A bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.

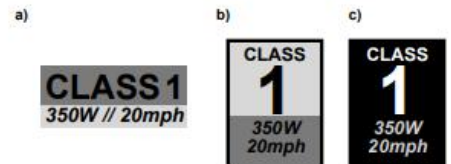
Class 2 electric bicycle: A bicycle equipped with a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle, and that is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.

Class 3 electric bicycle: A bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour and is equipped with a speedometer.

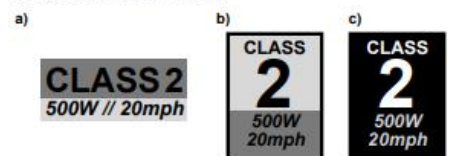
Any device outside of these definitions is not considered a low-speed electric bicycle that would be regulated as a bicycle.

EXAMPLE OF GENERIC CLASS LABELS

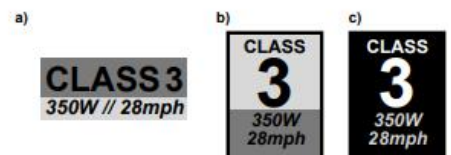
CLASS 1: 350W // 20MPH



CLASS 2: 500W // 20MPH



CLASS 3: 350W // 28MPH



Minnewaska State Park Preserve “E-bike” Policy

Minnewaska State Park Preserve permits cyclists to operate “Class 1” E-bikes on designated Carriage Roads where traditional “pedal” biking is permitted. “Class 2” and “Class 3” E-Bikes are prohibited.

To operate a “Low Speed E-bike” on Minnewaska State Park Preserve, an E-Bike must meet the following criteria:

All users must also adhere to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission Rules and Regulations regarding the use of traditional “pedal” bicycles on Minnewaska State Park Preserve property.

- The E-bike must be identified as a Class 1 with official manufacture label
- Weigh less than 100 pounds
- Be equipped with two or three wheels at least 11 inches in diameter, as well as operable pedals
- Be powered by an electric motor system rated at not more than 750 watts
- Be capable of speeds not more than 20 miles per hour on a level surface when powered by the motor source only
- Does not have the capability of being self-propelled (must be pedaled in order to engage the electric motor)

Minnewaska State Park Preserve Bicycling Rules

Please note that failure to follow these rules may jeopardize your future bicycling privileges within Minnewaska.

Ride on Carriage Roads Only

Observe all “NO Bicycling” signs. To prevent erosion and protect the environment, bikes are not allowed on footpaths, trails, or off-road.

Adhere to all posted closing to biking at Minnewaska due to snow, ice or soft road conditions.

Use caution: private landowners have vehicular access to carriage roads; you also may encounter patrol or maintenance vehicles.

Leave No Trace

The natural environment of the Shawangunks is fragile. Carry out what you carry in. Please pick up any trash (extra thanks if it’s not your own). Please don’t ride when roads are muddy, icy, or snow-covered. All plants and animals are protected. Please do not approach or harass wildlife.

Control Your Bicycle

Maximum permitted speed in all bicycling areas is 15 mph.

Always Yield Right of Way

Always stay to the right and ride single file. Warn all pedestrians that you are approaching; they may not hear you coming. Pedestrians do not always understand “on your left,” so slow down to 5 mph within 30 feet of pedestrians. Horses and carriages coming from the opposite direction or at an intersection have the right of way; please dismount 30 feet away and wait until they have passed at a safe distance. When overtaking horses and carriages, ask the driver or rider for permission to pass.

Plan Ahead and ALWAYS:

- WEAR A HELMET
- ride individually or in small groups only
- if riding alone, let someone know your destination and return time
- make sure your bicycle is in good condition and that you have spare parts
- carry a map and know how to use it
- bring plenty of water
- plan to return to your car by the posted closing time when riding at Minnewaska State Park Preserve

Notices

- The ebike policy is consistent with neighboring property owners at Mohonk Preserve, OSI River to Ridge Trail and the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail
All cyclists are required to wear helmets on all three properties.
- Please observe and respect all posted carriage road closures.