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(3) A copy of a decision on a stay request shall be sent to all parties to the appeal.

(h) *Duration.* A stay shall remain in effect for the 15-day period for determining discretionary review (§ 251.100), unless changed by the Reviewing Officer in accordance with paragraph (i) of this section.

(i) *Change in a stay.* A Reviewing Officer may change a stay decision in accordance with any terms established in the stay decision itself or at any time during pendency of an appeal that circumstances support a change of stay. In making any changes to a stay decision, the Reviewing Officer must issue a written notice to all parties to the appeal explaining the reason for making the changes and setting forth any terms or conditions that apply to the change.

(j) *Petitions to change a stay.* An appellant or intervenor may petition a Reviewing Officer to change or lift a stay at any time during the pendency of an appeal. Such petitions must be in writing, must explain how circumstances have changed since the stay was imposed, and must state why the change in the stay is being requested. The petitioner must send a copy of the petition to all parties to the appeal.

(k) *Appeal of stay decision or changes in stay.* A Reviewing Officer's decision to grant, deny, lift, or otherwise change a stay is not subject to further appeal and review, except when the first-level Reviewing Officer was the Forest Supervisor. In this instance, the Regional Forester has discretion to review.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 34510, Aug. 21, 1989; 64 FR 37846, July 14, 1999]

§ 251.92 Dismissal.

(a) The Reviewing Officer shall dismiss an appeal and close the record without a decision on the merits when:

(1) The appellant is not eligible to appeal a decision under this subpart.

(2) Appellant's notice of appeal is not filed within the required time period, or the notice of appeal fails to meet the minimum requirements of § 251.90 of this subpart to such an extent that the

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Reviewing Officer lacks adequate information on which to base a decision.

(3) In cases where there is only one appellant, the appellant withdraws the appeal.

(4) The requested relief cannot be granted under existing law, fact, or regulation.

(5) The decision is excluded from appeal under this subpart (§ 251.83).

(6) The Deciding Officer has withdrawn the decision under appeal.

(7) A request for review of the same decision has been filed by the same person under part 217 of this chapter.

(8) A mediated agreement is reached (§ 251.103).

(b) The Reviewing Officer shall give written notice of dismissal that includes an explanation of why the appeal is dismissed.

(c) A Reviewing Officer's dismissal decision is subject to discretionary review at the next administrative level as provided for in § 251.87(d), except when a dismissal decision results from withdrawal of an appeal by an appellant, withdrawal of the initial decision by the Deciding Officer, or a mediated resolution of the dispute.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 55 FR 7896, Mar. 6, 1990; 64 FR 37846, July 14, 1999]

§ 251.93 Resolution of issues.

(a) Authorized Forest Service officers shall, to the extent practicable and consistent with the public interest, consult and meet in person, or by phone, with holders of written instruments prior to issuing written decisions related to administration of a written authorization. The purpose of such meetings is to discuss any issues or concerns related to the authorized use and to reach a common understanding and agreement where possible prior to issuance of a written decision.

(b) When decisions are appealed, the Deciding Officer may discuss the appeal with the appellant(s) and intervenor(s) together or separately to narrow issues, agree on facts, and explore opportunities to resolve the issues by means other than review and decision on the appeal, including mediation pursuant to § 251.103. At the request of the Deciding Officer, the Reviewing Officer may extend the time period to allow

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for meaningful negotiations, except for appeals under review at the discretionary level. In the event of mediation of a grazing dispute under §251.103, the Reviewing Officer may extend the time for mediation only as provided in §251.103.

(c) The Deciding Officer has the authority to withdraw a decision, in whole or in part, during the appeal. Where a Deciding Officer decides to withdraw a decision, all parties to the appeal and the Reviewing Officer must receive written notice.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 34510, Aug. 21, 1989; 64 FR 37846, July 14, 1999]

§ 251.94 Responsive statement.

(a) *Content.* A responsive statement contains the Deciding Officer's response to the specific facts or issues of law or regulation and the requested relief set forth by the appellant in the notice of appeal.

(b) *Timeframe.* Unless the Reviewing Officer has granted an extension or dismissed the appeal, or unless mediation has been requested under this subpart, the Deciding Officer shall prepare a responsive statement and send it to the Reviewing Officer and all parties to the appeal within 30 days of receipt of the notice of appeal. Where mediation occurs but fails to resolve the issues, the Deciding Officer shall prepare a responsive statement and send it to the Reviewing Officer and all parties to the appeal within 30 days of the reinstatement of the appeal timeframes (§251.103(c)).

(c) *Replies.* Within 20 days of the post-marked date of the responsive statement, the appellant(s) and any intervenor(s) may file a written reply to the responsive statement with the Reviewing Officer. Appellants and intervenors must send a copy of any reply to a responsive statement to all parties to the appeal, including the Deciding Officer.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 64 FR 37846, July 14, 1999]

§ 251.95 Authority of reviewing officer.

(a) *Discretion to establish procedures.* A Reviewing Officer may issue such procedural orders as deemed appropriate to ensure orderly, expeditious, and fair

conduct of an appeal providing they are consistent with other provisions of this part.

(1) In appeals involving intervenors, the Reviewing Officer may prescribe special procedures to conduct the appeal.

(2) All parties to an appeal shall receive notice of any orders or decisions on the conduct of the appeal.

(3) Orders and determinations governing the conduct of an appeal are not subject to appeal and further review.

(b) *Consolidation of appeals.* A Reviewing Officer may consolidate multiple appeals of the same decision, or of similar decisions involving common issues of fact or law and issue one appeal decision. Similarly, a Reviewing Officer may issue one decision in cases involving separate reviews filed pursuant to 36 CFR part 217 and under this part when the decision at issue is the same decision. In such case, the Reviewing Officer shall give notice to all parties to multiple appeals.

(1) A decision to consolidate appeals is not subject to appeal and further review.

(2) At the discretion of the Reviewing Officer, the Deciding Officer may prepare one responsive statement to multiple appeals.

(c) *Requests for additional information.* Except in discretionary review conducted pursuant to §251.100 and second level appeals of decisions made by the District Ranger pursuant to §251.87(c) of this subpart, the Reviewing Officer may ask any party to an appeal for additional information as deemed necessary to decide the appeal. Such requests will be limited to obtaining and evaluating information needed to clarify issues raised. The Reviewing Officer shall notify all parties of the request for information, provide it to all parties, give opportunity to comment, and extend time periods if necessary to allow for submission of the information.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 34510, Aug. 21, 1989; 55 FR 7896, Mar. 6, 1990]

§ 251.96 Intervention.

(a) A request to intervene in an appeal may be made at any time prior to the closing of the appeal record