

§ 251.84

(l) Decisions related to National Forest land and resource management plans and projects only reviewable under 36 CFR part 217.

(m) Decisions related to rehabilitation of National Forest System lands and recovery of forest resources resulting from natural disasters or other natural phenomena such as wildfires, severe wind, earthquakes, and flooding when the Regional Forester or, in situations of national significance, the Chief of the Forest Service determines and gives notice that good cause exists to exempt such decisions from appeal under this subpart.

(n) Decisions imposing penalties for archaeological violations under 36 CFR 296.15 or for violations of prohibitions and orders under 36 CFR part 261.

(o) Reaffirmation of prior decisions.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 34510, Aug. 21, 1989]

§ 251.84 Obtaining notice.

(a) A Deciding Officer shall promptly give written notice of decisions subject to appeal under this subpart to applicants and holders defined in § 251.86 of this subpart and to any holder of like instruments who has made a written request to be notified of a specific decision. The notice shall include a statement of the Deciding Officer's willingness to meet with applicants or holders to hear and discuss any concerns or issues related to the decision (§ 251.93). The notice shall also specify the name of the officer to whom an appeal of the decision may be filed, the address, and the deadline for filing an appeal.

(b) In States with Department of Agriculture certified mediation programs, a Deciding Officer shall also give written notice of the opportunity for the affected term grazing permit holder to request mediation of decisions to suspend or cancel term grazing permits, in whole or in part, pursuant to 36 CFR 222.4(a)(2)(i), (ii), (iv), (v) and (a)(3) through (a)(6). Such notice must inform the permit holder that, if mediation is desired, the permit holder must request mediation as part of the filing of an appeal.

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

36 CFR Ch. II (7-1-07 Edition)

§ 251.85 Election of appeal process.

(a) No decision can be appealed by the same person under both this subpart and part 217 of this chapter.

(b) Should a decision be reviewable under this subpart as well as part 217 of this chapter, a party who qualifies to bring an appeal under this subpart can elect which process to use for obtaining review of a decision, but in so doing, the appellant thereby forfeits all right to appeal the same decision under the other review process. However, a holder who waives the right to appeal under the provisions of 36 CFR part 217 may intervene pursuant to 36 CFR 217.6(b).

§ 251.86 Parties.

Only the following may participate in the appeals process provided under this subpart:

(a) An applicant who, in response to a prospectus or written solicitation or other notice by the Forest Service, files a formal written request for a written authorization to occupy and use National Forest System land covered under § 251.82 of this subpart and

(1) Was denied the authorization, or

(2) Was offered an authorization subject to terms and conditions that the applicant finds unreasonable or impracticable.

(b) The signatory(ies) or holder(s) of a written authorization to occupy and use National Forest System land covered under § 251.82 of this subpart who seeks relief from a written decision related to that authorization.

(c) An intervenor as defined in § 251.81 of this subpart.

(d) The Deciding Officer who made the decision being appealed under this subpart.

§ 251.87 Levels of appeal.

(a) *Decisions made by the Chief.* If the Chief of the Forest Service is the Deciding Officer, the appeal is to the Secretary of Agriculture. Review by the Secretary is discretionary. Within 15 calendar days of receipt of a timely notice of appeal, the Secretary shall determine whether or not to review the decision. If the Secretary has not decided to review the Chief's decision by the expiration of the 15-day period, the requester(s) shall be notified by the

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Secretary's office that the Chief's decision is the final administrative decision of the Department of Agriculture. When the Secretary elects to review an initial decision made by the Chief, the Secretary shall conduct the review in accordance with the first level appeal procedures outlined in this rule.

(b) *Decisions made By Forest Supervisors and Regional Foresters.* Only one level of appeal is available on written decisions by Forest Service line officers below the level of the Chief and above the level of the District Ranger. The levels of available appeal are as follows:

(1) If the decision is made by a Forest Supervisor, the appeal is filed with the Regional Forester;

(2) If the decision is made by a Regional Forester, the appeal is filed with the Chief of the Forest Service.

(c) *Decisions made by the District Ranger.* Two levels of appeal are available for written decisions by District Rangers.

(1) The appeal for initial review is filed with the Forest Supervisor.

(2) The appeal for a second level of review is filed with the Regional Forester within 15 days of the first level appeal decision. Upon receiving such a request, the Regional Forester shall promptly request the first level file from the Forest Supervisor. The review shall be conducted on the existing record and no additional information shall be added to the file.

(d) *Discretionary review of dismissal decisions.* Dismissal decisions rendered by Forest Service line officers pursuant to this part (§251.92) are subject to only one level of discretionary review (§251.100) as follows:

(1) If the Reviewing Officer was the Forest Supervisor, the Regional Forester has discretion to review.

(2) If the Reviewing Officer was the Regional Forester, the Chief has discretion to review.

(3) If the Reviewing Officer was the Chief, the Secretary of Agriculture has discretion to review.

(e) *Discretionary review of appeal decisions.* Appeal decisions rendered by Regional Foresters and the Chief pursuant to this part are subject to only one level of discretionary review as follows:

(1) If the Reviewing Officer is the Regional Forester, the Chief of the Forest Service has discretion to review.

(2) If the Reviewing Officer is Chief, the Secretary of Agriculture has discretion to review.

(3) A Regional Forester's decision on a second-level appeal constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture on the appeal and is not subject to further review by a higher level officer under this subpart.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 34510, Aug. 21, 1989]

§ 251.88 Filing procedures.

(a) *Filing procedures.* In order to appeal a decision under this subpart, an appellant must:

(1) File a notice of appeal in accordance with §251.90 of this subpart with the next higher line officer as identified in §251.87.

(2) File the notice of appeal within 45 days of the date on the notice of the written decision being appealed (§251.84); and

(3) Simultaneously send a copy of the notice of appeal to the Deciding Officer.

(b) *Evidence of timely filing.* It is the responsibility of those filing an appeal to file the notice of appeal by the end of the filing period. In the event of questions, legible postmarks will be considered evidence of timely filing. Where postmarks are illegible, the Reviewing Officer shall rule on the timeliness of the notice of appeal. Untimely submissions are subject to dismissal as provided for in §251.92(a)(2).

(c) *Computation of time period for filing.* (1) The time period for filing a notice of appeal of a decision under this subpart begins on the first day after the Deciding Officer's written notice of the decision. All other time periods applicable to this subpart also will be computed to begin on the first day following an event or action related to the appeal.

(2) Time periods applicable to this subpart are computed using calendar days. Saturdays, Sundays, or Federal holidays are included in computing the time allowed for filing an appeal; however, when the filing period would expire on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal