

§ 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 ap-

peal 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 (§ 251.98) at the first level of appeal (§ 251.87). Requests to intervene in an appeal at the discretionary review level (§ 251.87(d)) shall be denied.

(b) To request intervention in a first-level appeal under this subpart, a party, at a minimum, must:

(1) Submit a written petition to intervene to the Reviewing Officer,

(2) Be, as defined at § 251.81 of this subpart, an applicant for or holder of a written instrument issued by the Forest Service that is the subject of or affected by the appeal, and have an interest that could be directly affected by a decision on the appeal, and

(3) Show, in the request for intervention, how the decision on the appeal