

## Forest Service, USDA

## §214.19

(i) The day after the date the reply to the responsive statement is due if no oral presentation is conducted;

(ii) The day after the oral presentation is conducted if no transcript of the oral presentation is being prepared; or

(iii) The day after the date a transcript of the oral presentation is due if one is being prepared.

(2) The Appeal Deciding Officer shall notify all parties to the appeal of closing of the record.

(d) *Inspection by the public.* The appeal record is open for public inspection in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and 7 CFR part 1.

### §214.18 Appeal decision.

(a) Appeal decisions made by the Appeal Deciding Officer shall be issued within 30 days of the date the appeal record is closed.

(b) The appeal decision shall be based solely on the appeal record and oral presentation, if one is conducted.

(c) The appeal decision shall conform to all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

(d) The appeal decision may affirm or reverse the appealable decision, in whole or in part. The appeal decision must specify the basis for affirmation or reversal and may include instructions for further action by the Responsible Official.

(e) Except where a decision to conduct discretionary review has been made and a discretionary review decision has been issued, the appeal decision shall constitute USDA's final administrative decision.

### §214.19 Procedures for discretionary review.

(a) *Initiation.* (1) One day after issuance of an appeal decision, the Appeal Deciding Officer shall send a copy of the appeal decision, appeal, and appealable decision to the Discretionary Reviewing Officer to determine whether discretionary review of the appeal decision should be conducted.

(2) One day after issuance of a Chief's decision that is eligible for discretionary review under §214.7(b)(2), the Chief shall send the decision to the Discretionary Reviewing Officer to deter-

mine whether discretionary review should be conducted.

(b) *Criteria for determining whether to conduct discretionary review.* In deciding whether to conduct discretionary review, the Discretionary Reviewing Officer should, at a minimum, consider the degree of controversy surrounding the decision, the potential for litigation, and the extent to which the decision establishes precedent or new policy.

(c) *Time period.* Upon receipt of the appeal decision, appeal, and appealable decision or Chief's decision, the Discretionary Reviewing Officer shall have 30 days to determine whether to conduct discretionary review and may request the appeal record or the record related to the Chief's decision during that time to assist in making that determination. If a request for the record is made, it must be transmitted to the Discretionary Reviewing Officer within 5 days.

(d) *Notification.* The Discretionary Reviewing Officer shall notify the parties and the Appeal Deciding Officer in writing of a decision to conduct discretionary review. The Discretionary Reviewing Officer may notify the parties and the Appeal Deciding Officer of a decision not to conduct discretionary review within 30 days. If the Discretionary Reviewing Officer takes no action within 30 days of receipt of the appeal decision, appeal, and appealable decision or Chief's decision, the appeal decision or Chief's decision shall constitute USDA's final administrative decision.

(e) *Scope of discretionary review and issuance of a discretionary review decision.* Discretionary review shall be limited to the record. No additional information shall be considered by the Discretionary Reviewing Officer. The Discretionary Reviewing Officer shall have 30 days to issue a discretionary review decision after notification of the parties and Appeal Deciding Officer has occurred pursuant to §214.19(d). The Discretionary Reviewing Officer's decision shall constitute USDA's final administrative decision. If a discretionary review decision is not issued within 30 days following the notification of the decision to conduct discretionary review, the appeal decision or

## § 214.20

Chief's decision shall constitute USDA's final administrative decision.

### § 214.20 Exhaustion of administrative remedies.

Per 7 U.S.C. 6912(e), judicial review of a decision that is appealable under this part is premature unless the plaintiff has exhausted the administrative remedies under this part.

### § 214.21 Information collection requirements.

The rules of this part governing appeal of decisions relating to occupancy or use of National Forest System lands and resources specify the information that an appellant must provide in an appeal. Therefore, these rules contain information collection requirements as defined in 5 CFR part 1320. These information collection requirements are assigned Office of Management and Budget Control Number 0596-0231.

### § 214.22 Applicability and effective date.

This part prescribes the procedure for administrative review of appealable decisions and Chief's decisions set forth in § 214.4 issued on or after June 5, 2013.

## PART 215—NOTICE, COMMENT, AND APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Sec.

215.1 Purpose and scope.

215.2 Definitions.

215.3 Proposed actions subject to legal notice and opportunity to comment.

215.4 Actions not subject to legal notice and opportunity to comment.

215.5 Legal notice of proposed actions.

215.6 Comments on proposed actions.

215.7 Legal notice of decision.

215.8 Appeal Deciding Officer.

215.9 Decision implementation.

215.10 Emergency situations.

215.11 Decisions subject to appeal.

215.12 Decisions and actions not subject to appeal.

215.13 Who may appeal.

215.14 Appeal content.

215.15 Appeal time periods and process.

215.16 Dismissal of appeal without review.

215.17 Informal disposition.

215.18 Formal review and disposition procedures.

215.19 Appeal Reviewing Officer.

## 36 CFR Ch. II (7–1–14 Edition)

215.20 Secretary's authority.

215.21 Judicial proceedings.

215.22 Applicability and effective date.

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 472, 551; sec. 322, Pub. L. 102-381 (Appeals Reform Act), 106 Stat. 1419 (16 U.S.C. 1612 note).

SOURCE: 68 FR 33595, June 4, 2003, unless otherwise noted.

### § 215.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) *Purpose.* The rules of this part have two purposes. First, this part establishes a process by which the public receives notice and is provided an opportunity to comment on proposed actions for projects and activities implementing a land and resource management plan prior to a decision by the Responsible Official. Second, this part establishes an appeal process and identifies the decisions that may be appealed, who may appeal those decisions, the responsibilities of the participants in an appeal, and the procedures that apply for the prompt disposition of the appeal.

(b) *Scope.* Notice of proposed actions and opportunity to comment provide an opportunity for the public to provide meaningful input prior to the decision on projects and activities implementing land management plans. The rules of this part complement other opportunities to participate in the Forest Service's project and activity planning, such as those provided by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its implementing regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508 and 36 CFR part 220; the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR part 219; and the regulations at 36 CFR part 216 governing public notice and comment for certain Forest Service directives.

[68 FR 33595, June 4, 2003, as amended at 78 FR 33723, June 5, 2013]

### § 215.2 Definitions.

*Address*—An individual's or organization's current physical mailing address. An e-mail address is insufficient for identification.

*Appeal*—A document filed with an Appeal Deciding Officer in which an individual or entity seeks review of a Forest Service decision under this part.