Example of Decision Rational – Callie Mare Fire, PSICC, June 2011

The fire is located on steep terrain in Purgatoire Canyon with numerous drainages in the area. Fuels are comprised of tamarisk and grasses in the canyon bottom, with Pinion-Juniper on the surrounding slopes. Outside the canyon, the majority of fuel is grass with some PJ. This combination of topography and fuels at the fire location create safety exposure to fire management personnel walking to or suppressing the fire. Escape routes and safety zones are readily apparent outside the canyon, but in the canyons, the safety zones are comprised of burned areas. Some risk exposure will be transferred to aerial and ground forces by securing the perimeter. Those efforts could be limited by significant wind speeds that could persist thru the operational period of 6/8 with Red Flag Conditions. The use of aerial resources along w/fire fighters on the ground to assist allow for a high probability of success in limiting further fire spread with some limitations due to the broken terrain and continuous fuels. Fire weather for the next two days should allow for some success towards meeting containment objectives.

Resource concerns exist due to the historic Rourke Ranch complex, Dinosaur track site and the Dolores Cemetery complex. In addition, numerous private lands are in the areas of the fire with structures within 5 miles of the current perimeter. Mitigation actions employed thus far through the construction of control lines on the fire have had limited success with the fire spreading from DOD to FS, State and private lands. Heritage resource sites will be evaluated as the fire spreads.

Anticipated winds and Red Flag conditions on 6/7 and 6/8, and near-record ERC’s will combine to pose a high risk of the fire continuing to spread.

Based on the Operational Needs Assessment and associated complexity of the fire, a Type 2 IMT has been ordered to adequately manage the incident at this time. If the incident complexity changes, the IC role will change commensurate with the complexity.

Impacts from smoke will be mitigated by maintaining close contact with local community, adjacent fire districts and local and regional media.

Due to an extreme wind event on 6/7, the fire spread rapidly to approximately 8,000 acres. Private, DOD and FS lands are now involved.

The current course of action will continue to be achievement of full perimeter containment. This specific decision incorporates actions to implement strategies for full point and structure protection and minimize fire spread on all perimeters. These actions have required a larger suite of resources to implement, increasing complexity and thereby increasing exposure to fire fighter safety. To not take these actions would raise the threat to private property and the resources in the areas to unacceptable levels.