



Not Your Ordinary Job – Episode Seven Transcript

- Jasmine:** Hello, everyone, welcome to the Bureau of Land Management, Eastern State podcast, Not Your Ordinary Job. I'm your co-host, Jasmine.
- Ashley:** Hello, everybody. I'm Ashley.
- Jasmine:** Each week, we will highlight a Jackson Hotshot team member by allowing them to speak about their experience working in the career of fire. We are very excited for you to listen to their stories. We also encourage you to head over to NIFC.gov for the latest fire news every weekday.
- Ashley:** We'd like to welcome Shelby on the show. How are you?
- Shelby:** I'm good. How are you guys?
- Ashley:** We're doing great.
- Jasmine:** We are doing pretty good. Thank you for allowing us to talk with you. Our first question would be what made you want to get into the career of fire?
- Shelby:** Okay, well, originally, it was something that I thought would be interesting and challenging. But I was a little nervous about doing it when I first started. I started previously with prescribed burning and realized that it was kind of exciting, there was some challenge there. And then I wanted to see if it was going to be something I was capable of doing on a larger level as more of a full-time position than just the prescribed burning, which I only got to do occasionally. So really, the challenge of it is a lot of the reason that I wanted to pursue it.
- Ashley:** And how long have you been with fire?
- Shelby:** So, this is my first full season. But like I said, I did some occasional burning last year as well.
- Jasmine:** Wow. So, throughout your career, what are the biggest challenges that you faced when working (in) fire?
- Shelby:** I think for me, a lot of it was more mental, that self-doubt in the beginning of whether or not I could do everything that was asked of me. So, not believing that I was capable of something was more of a hindrance than other parts of the job. Of course, there's the physical aspect, there's the fatigue, things like that, which can be very challenging, but you can kind of work up to but I think the biggest one for me was that mental attitude and having to change it and say, "You know what, I can do this. I can continue pushing forward."
- Ashley:** Yeah. What's your favorite part of working in the career?
- Shelby:** Definitely, just the challenge and excitement and the variety of it. So, you get you get both the physical challenges and the mental challenges at different times. And like I said, kind of with the

last question, realizing that I'm capable of so much more than I thought is one of my favorite things. Also, when you're in the middle of all the action, that's really exciting, because the adrenaline carries you through the day. And it's definitely...one of my favorite things is just that it's so different from what you see in a lot of mainstream jobs, just so much variety, and a really different way of life and thinking things that you're going to do, it's definitely not your nine to five office job. So, I really like that and appreciate it with this job.

Jasmine: So, throughout your career, are there any goals that you've accomplished?

Shelby: My original goal was just to see whether or not I was capable of being able to do this work. And recently, I've seen that, you know, there's been a lot of improvement for me personally. But there's obviously still a lot of room for improvement in the future. And I do want to continue to get better physically, (I) want to get more training, and start to become a more qualified firefighter as I move forward, and as I move up. And then one of the things that I do love is just how different everyone's personality on this crew can be. We all come from different places, different backgrounds. But we all come together as a crew to be able to work together, whether it's when we're in the station or out on a fire. We can hold each other accountable and motivate each other to continue to get better. And there are definitely some people on the crew that I've become extremely close to who are very supportive and very motivating of me as I'm continuing to grow and learn.

Jasmine: You're pretty new in the career of fire, so what do you feel are the biggest misconceptions when it comes to the general public about fire, if you've seen any?

Shelby: I would say, and I even had some of these misconceptions coming in, I think what the media portrays in movies or things like that is that everything about fire is fun and exciting. And there are definitely those times where you're in the middle of it, it is really exciting. The adrenaline is there, you're moving, there's fire everywhere. But there are also times where it's really hard. Or you're just tired. There are also times where...sort of more behind the scenes that you don't see where you have to be patient, and just wait until you get that assignment. And that can be really hard because, you know, you want to be out there, you want to be doing something, but it's not your turn yet. And there's some less, I guess, glamorous things that maybe people don't see like, just daily maintenance and cleaning and the upkeep of what we have to do with our gear and our tools that you don't, you don't factor into you think it's all going to be that adrenaline-filled, fighting fire out there on the front line. And while that is a bit of it, there's also the behind the scenes things that that people don't see that we have to take care of as well.

Ashley: What does it take to become a great team member?

Shelby: I think a big one is flexibility is a key to being a good team member. So plans are constantly changing. And you just have to be able to go with the flow and accept your new assignment or your new position. Like trying your best and giving your all. You don't have to be the strongest or the fastest person on the crew to be a good team member, but you've got to be working towards that. You've got to always be trying to get better every day. And if you're doing that, and you're trying to get faster, you're trying to learn more, you're trying to take on more responsibility, people will notice that and appreciate that about you. Versus if you're if you're on the other side and saying, "Well, you know, I'm not very fast, and I'm just not going to get any faster." Or, "I don't, I don't know how to do this so I'm not going to try to learn how to do something." That's when you're not contributing to the team. That's when sort of the animosity starts to rise within the team. So definitely being flexible and always pushing, always trying to improve. Always trying to get better are two really big things with being a part of a team and being part of the group.

Jasmine: Definitely, it really does take up believing in yourself and believing that you can really get the job done with the team.

Shelby: Absolutely.

Jasmine: That's great. Well, we would like to thank Shelby for allowing us to interview her and we definitely would like to thank you for everything that you're doing with the Jackson Hotshots, and we can't wait to hear about many different success stories coming from you in the future. I know you say you're new. So, we're looking forward to hearing about your journey.

Shelby: Thank you very much.

Ashley: Listen to our podcast every Friday to learn more about our Jackson Hotshots.