



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

## Not Your Ordinary Job – Episode Three Transcript

- Jasmine:** Hello, everyone, welcome to the Bureau of Land Management Eastern States 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](http://NIFC.gov) for the latest fire news every weekday.
- Ashley:** We would like to welcome Dallas on the show. How are you?
- Dallas:** Good, we had morning PT and really got after it and I'm feeling strong. And we're taking a class today developing our leadership skills.
- Jasmine:** We'd like to ask you, what made you want to get into the career of fire?
- Dallas:** Yes. So after college I did a year of AmeriCorps service and found out about fire management, firefighting through that AmeriCorps service here in the NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps). And, you know, the three or four months I spent on the boat on national tourist most difficult and most rewarding part of it, which is just hot shotting so that I could progress. What I thought my capabilities as a person, you know, contribute to my country.
- Ashley:** And how long have you been in the career officially?
- Dallas:** This is my second season with the crew.
- Jasmine:** Wow. So throughout the time you've been with the crew, what do you feel are the biggest challenges that are faced when working in the career of fire?
- Dallas:** You know, during the six months, the pretty intense, interpersonal sort of adventure. You know, it's the same 21 people for six months And you're away from your own structure of family and friends that exists outside of fire. So, you know, truly everything comes down to the crew. It's not, it's not for everyone. You totally have to suborn yourself to the crew in order to maximize the efficiency and keep everyone safe.
- Ashley:** So there's a natural bond that comes together?
- Dallas:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's a bond. I mean, it's almost unshakable, I mean, like to breach the bond is, is unthinkable, I would never even think about doing it. But it's, it's difficult, you know, to develop that kind of relationship. Keeping that up for six months is tough. But it's also the most rewarding thing you can do.

- Ashley:** So what's the favorite part of working in fire?
- Dallas:** My favorite part of working is, you know, you're never really sure on assignment, what you're going to do next. You're running and gunning, and then you're waiting, and then you're running again, you know, the camaraderie that gets out of that just embracing the suck. You don't get that many places, and just the beautiful things that we all see on the process of doing all these fairly intense things. That's my favorite part.
- Jasmine:** Throughout your career in fire, are there any goals that you've accomplished in the career of fire? And are there any goals that you still would like to accomplish?
- Dallas:** Yes. So I wanted to get on a Hotshot crew and, you know, see if I had the physical and mental fortitude to complete a season with a hotshot crew, so I did my first season last year. And now I want to be able to see if I can eventually go on to lead other Hotshots in some form or capacity. And then part of that is learning to be not just the leader, but a good first year, you're just learning what you're supposed to be doing. And then as the second and third, and maybe fourth year, you're learning how to teach those what you're supposed to be doing. Like you're to teach that to the younger guys, and also to maximize how good you are at those specific tasks. And then at some point, you start to think about how you're going to implement and do those tasks as part of the cohesive strategy. And at some point, I would like to get to that.
- Ashley:** What would you say have been the success stories while working in these seasons?
- Dallas:** Last year, we were on fire in Nevada. The Goose Fire, our first running and gunning and fire of the year and learned a lot, learned a lot about ourselves and getting around it. And doing the work to get it corralled was pretty cool to be a part of.
- Jasmine:** Yeah, so I honestly I have to say when I, you know, go online I see like certain comments from like the general public when it comes to about me when it comes to fire in general. I see like a lot of different opinions and different comments, different thoughts. So, what do you feel are the biggest misconceptions?
- Dallas:** You know, we go out and fight fire. You know, that's only one thing that we do. Hotshots particularly in our loop, you know, we do a lot there's fire is dynamic, it's always gonna be there. It's always part of the environment, but Hotshots are a tool to be used in land management objectives. So we help out with prescribed burning, we help out in thinning. We help out cleaning up debris after storms, you know, whatever. However, we're supposed to fit into our country's conservation policies, is how Hotshots and fires supposed to fit in. And I think that's a big misconception is that we just go out and tackle fires. Well, sometimes we allow fire to do it's best for the environment.
- Jasmine:** Exactly. Yeah. I mean, a lot of people don't necessarily know that you do a lot to help out with the community, other than, you know, putting out fires. Yeah, I will say that's definitely a good misconception.
- Ashley:** What do you think it takes to become a great team member?
- Dallas:** So a great team member should be physically and mentally fit. And then on top of that, I like to stay morally fit as well. Physically fit, constantly demanding your highest as far as your physical capacity and then every time that you think you've reached a peak, going and climbing and reaching another peak as far as physical fitness. With that type of attitude, you're never quite

good enough so you should always be trying to get just a little bit better at whatever it is that you're doing. And the ability to receive criticism properly. Those are huge. Like that the, you know, this job can be stressful, but the best way to alleviate that stress is be able to take the criticism that you get, and channel it positively and make you a better... Then on top of that, morally fit, understand that it's crew before you always and so if you're not willing to accept that you're part of something larger than yourself, and that you represent not just yourself when you're part of the Jackson Hotshots, but that you represent all 21 of us and management, then this job is not for you. But if you're willing to be a part of a team and do accept the risk and rewards that come with that, then you're absolutely right to be a Hotshot.

**Jasmine:** That's wonderful. We definitely would like to thank you for allowing us interview you and we thank you for everything that you do everything that the Jackson Hotshots do to help our communities and continue to inspire.

**Dallas:** Thank you guys so much for taking the time to interview me and spread the word about what we do. We really appreciate what you guys are trying to help us out with.

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