

The Lodgepole Pine Moment of Addressing Climate Breakdown

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Tuesday, August 10, 2010

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So a chunk of floating ice separated from Greenland last week. The ice cube is bigger than Manhattan.

No big deal, it seems. How many people sold their cars because of that, or the BP negligent disaster, or the Endbridge pipeline leak.

I don't know how many times an Antarctic ice shelf breaks off a piece or which of the last few years the Beaufort Sea ice melted in the summer or if Greenland will send another iceberg into the Titanic shipping lanes. Are they watershed moments sufficient to cause change? Not really.

I think about forest fire season and constantly go back to the symbolism of the lodgepole pine. Its pine cones need tremendous heat to release the seeds. Before we tried to domesticate our forests and before climate change gave the pine beetle complete license to kill, forests burned about every 200 years. Good for the lodgepole pine.

But now, what kind of intense heat will wake enough of us up to drastically alter our lives to change everything we do to avert climate breakdown?

Our society is the Titanic, too arrogant to care about mere ice bergs, even ones bigger than Manhattan. What will it take for us to take a reality check and change our ways?