



Are the St. Pierre River's days numbered?

Description

Montreal must not turn its back on one of the last sections of a river that played a major role in its history

By Louise Legault

In October 2020, **Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook** and eight co-signatories from the university and environmental community published an [open letter in WestmountMag.ca](#), alerting the populace and authorities to the fate of one of the last above-ground portions of the **St. Pierre River**, which flows through the **Meadowbrook golf course** in Lachine. This section had dried up as a result of the deviation of the upstream storm sewer into which the river had been channelled many years earlier. The Meadowbrook section no longer flowed and had become nothing but rocks and puddles.



St. Pierre River at Meadowbrook in Winter

Now a decision by the Court of Appeal on January 14, 2021, has brought further complications. In 2018, the Superior Court ordered the City of Montreal to stop polluting the river and clean the surroundings. The decision was appealed by both parties to the suit, the developer *Meadowbrook Groupe Pacific*, which owns the property, and the City of Montreal. The Court refused to grant Montreal an extension.

The developer appealed. This time the Court, citing Article 979 of the Civil Code of Quebec, ordered the City to stop discharging water from the storm sewer into the river. Montreal had chosen in 2020 to temporarily deviate the storm sewer in dry periods while waiting for the cities of Côte Saint-Luc and Montreal West to correct the cross-connected sewer lines contaminating the sewer. This action would have allowed the river to be renaturalized. After the Appeal Court ruling, it is feared that the City of Montreal's decision may become permanent and complete. The 200-metre section of the river running through Meadowbrook would now be fed only sporadically by rain and snowmelt.



Last December, Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook took part in an international symposium, held in Florence, Italy, on daylighting rivers. All over the world, cities seek to daylight buried urban rivers to reduce flood risk and water-treatment costs for runoff. The process creates cool areas to help combat episodes of extreme heat in our cities, which are increasingly frequent because of climate change. This is not the time for Montreal to turn its back on one of the last sections of a river that played a major role in its history.



St. Pierre River at Meadowbrook in Spring

There have been several unsuccessful attempts to daylight the St. Pierre River; efforts to indicate its presence through cultural restoration have also failed. It seems odd to be reminded of a river only by the infrastructure that conceals it, whether it is the William Collector at Pointe-à-Callière or the woonerf (a Dutch word for a “living street”) on the St. Pierre collector. It is thus vital to preserve this last visible vestige of the river on Meadowbrook.

All over the world, cities seek to daylight buried urban rivers to reduce flood risk and water-treatment costs for runoff.

Montreal must, of course, abide by the Court orders but it must, at the very least, ensure that everything is in place



(and the collector decontaminated) so that the stream may be allowed to flow again when Meadowbrook becomes a heritage nature park, which is the goal of Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook.

Major organizations such as the **World Wildlife Fund**, the **David Suzuki Foundation**, the **Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society** and the **Fondation Rivières**, among others, already support our efforts.

To learn what you can do to help save the St. Pierre River, please visit Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook's website lesamisdemeadowbrook.org

Watch this report on the St. Pierre River by Patrick Barnard:

Feature image: *St. Pierre River at Meadowbrook in Winter*
All images: *Nigel Dove*

Sign-up to our newsletter
and get email notification
of our most recent articles



Read [other articles about the environment](#)



Louise Legault is a member of the Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook steering committee. The group has defended the St. Pierre River and the Meadowbrook golf course from residential development for 30 years in order to create a nature park linked to the Falaise Saint-Jacques and the Sud-Ouest through the dalle-parc. lesamisdemeadowbrook.org



WE BRING THE SPRINGTIME
Save \$10 when you book online.



Category

- 1. Article | Environment

Tags

- 1. environmental protection
- 2. Louise Legault



3. Meadowbrook
4. St. Pierre River

Date Created

March 2021