



Les Amis du parc Meadowbrook  
vows to restore river

## Description

# St. Pierre River tragedy now complete: last open portion of the historic Montreal river is buried

March 3, 2022

Construction crews hired by the City of Montreal are currently burying the last open portion of the **St. Pierre River**, located on the Lachine side of the 57-hectare **Meadowbrook golf course** in the cities of **Montreal** and **Côte Saint-Luc (CSL)**.

In mid-February, crews connected the large sewer located adjacent to the river and installed a pump to move the water coming from the stormwater system that is contaminated by residential sewage. The construction project began in the fall of 2021.

**Les Amis du parc Meadowbrook (Les Amis)**, an environmental group dedicated to converting the golf course into a municipal nature park open to all, has been fighting to preserve the open section of the river since 2018, calling on the municipalities of Montreal, Montreal West and CSL to work together to repair all the contamination problems to prevent wastewater from entering the river.



This picture shows the small amount of frozen water remaining in the St. Pierre riverbed. A large pile of rocks and soil from the digging of the trench for the storm sewer looms over the river. Thankfully City workers assured that the riverbed would not be filled in and that all soil not used to bury the sewer would be removed.

Les Amis has left no stone unturned to prevent the burying, seeking support and action from the municipalities and calling on the provincial government to intervene to protect the river.

**Groupe Pacific** purchased the golf course in 2006 from Marathon Realities, the real estate arm of **Canadian Pacific**, at a cost of \$3 million, with the intention of building 1,500 plus residential units on the green space.

In 2010, the Montreal administration rejected Groupe Pacific's development project on the Lachine side of Meadowbrook and in 2015, the City of Montreal adopted the **Agglomeration Master Plan**, the *Schéma d'aménagement*, which designated all of Meadowbrook as **Large Green space/ Recreational**, thereby protecting the entire green space for recreational use only.

Groupe Pacific is now suing for about \$60 million in compensation. Two court cases are still pending.



The storm sewer newly connected to the Toe Blake Park collector, which was the source of the St. Pierre River. The riverbed, which can be seen in the bottom right of the picture, no longer has any flow as all the river water is now being bypassed through the storm sewer which will soon be completely buried.

As well, Groupe Pacific secured a Quebec Court of Appeal ruling in 2021 that required Montreal to bury the river. The ruling gave no leeway for the City to retain the open portion of the river past the 18-month deadline imposed by the court.

“This action of Groupe Pacific is vengeful and hypocritical,” said **Campbell Stuart**, a member of the Les Amis steering committee. “When Groupe Pacific wanted to build its condos, the river was the centrepiece of their project – actually called the “Petite Rivière” project. This is the typical “Plan B” by developers – buy unbuildable land for a song and, when frustrated in building, sue the city to cause maximum pain and collect big money on the way out the door. This action is part of Groupe Pacific’s continuing efforts to extract many millions from the City and its taxpayers.”

“We appreciate the sincere efforts of Montreal and its lawyers to protect the river,” said Stuart, adding that, “their hand has been forced by the developer and the courts. The City is still our partner in the goal of acquiring Meadowbrook and converting it into a nature park, open and accessible to all. It is crucial that the riverbed, where water has been flowing from time immemorial, be protected until the river can be daylighted. We are asking the City to publicly commit to this, and to undertake to resurface the river as soon as possible for all to enjoy.”

Along with Les Amis, residents and environmental groups from across the island have been lobbying all three levels of government for the past 32 years to preserve the whole of the Meadowbrook green space and convert it into a park.



This is one of the few segments of the St. Pierre River storm sewer pipe that had not been buried yet on February 13, 2022. It is right in the middle of the golf course as can be seen by the beautiful winter scene in the background. All that will remain of the river water will be manhole covers at intervals across this green space.

“This area is home to many species of flora and fauna, some of which are rare,” said **Irwin Rapoport**, a member of the steering committee and an advocate for environmental protection in the Greater Montreal Area. “With so many natural areas having been lost to development and so many more under threat, it is essential to re-wild Meadowbrook and provide a safe home for biodiversity that is in peril. A Meadowbrook nature park would serve the recreational needs of Montrealers year-round and help relieve pressure on Mount Royal Park.”

For more information about Les Amis du parc Meadowbrook and its ongoing campaign to create a park and protect the river, please contact [lesamisdemeadowbrook@gmail.com](mailto:lesamisdemeadowbrook@gmail.com)

*Images: courtesy of Les Amis du parc Meadowbrook*

*Feature image: the St. Pierre River at Meadowbrook in 2018*

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*Les Amis du parc Meadowbrook's mission is to protect Meadowbrook from development and transform it into Meadowbrook Park, a new 57-hectare urban nature heritage park, including the historic St. Pierre River, open and accessible to all, and connected through a greenway to a network of parks, including the falaise Saint-Jacques. Les Amis du parc Meadowbrook is a member of the Green Coalition.*



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