

ENGAGEMENT: Collaborative Process

 Charleston, MS

BACKGROUND

CHARLESTON IS A CITY IN NORTH CENTRAL MS THAT STRETCHES 1.4 SQUARE MILES IN TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY.

The City of Charleston, MS received notice from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality to close and clean a city owned unauthorized (unpermitted) dump site that was once the city’s cesspool.

For 20 years, the improperly disposed waste had become a breeding ground for rodents and insects. The site, boarded by Tillatoba Creek, and within 20 feet of residents’ homes, posed significant threats to wildlife, water supply, public health and safety, property value and quality of life.

The State of Mississippi 2002 List of Waterbodies denotes the Tillatoba Creek drainage area (Waterbody ID No. MS272E) in Yalobusha and Tallahatchie counties, to be listed for aquatic life support due to pathogens. This waterbody is in the Yazoo River drainage basin.



DEMOGRAPHICS

The population was 2,193 at the time of the 2010 census. In the 2013 US Census’ population estimates, Charleston’s population decreased to 2, 171. Of the population, African Americans comprise 75.4% - (1,693); Caucasian comprise 21.9% (492); Hispanic - 42 (1.9%); Asian - 14 (0.6%) and American Indian - 9 (0.4%). The percentage of residents living in poverty in 2012 was 41.1%.



ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

MDEQ COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES BEGAN IN 2015 AND CONTINUE TODAY...



DATE	ACTIVITY
01/21/2015	Mayor S. Smith requested assistance from the SBEAP with closure and clean-up of an unauthorized dump site off Murphy Road Request was outside of SBEAP scope. It was referred to OCE’s Environmental Justice (EJ) Program EJ staff conference call with Mayor Smith
01/29/2015	Conducted a visual site assessment of the unofficial dump site
02/02/2015	Developed a video of Charleston’s non-permitted dump
02/05/2014	Presented video and presentation on the non-permitted dump at the EPA’s Priority Projects in MCBM Member Mayors’ Communities – How Can Federal, State and Local Partnerships Support?
02/09/2015	Reached out to Randy Wolfe to assist the city with the development of CAG
02/12/2015	Assisted City of Charleston with MDEQ’s solid waste grant application
02/13/2015	Reached out to Tony Caldwell to determine if the city was currently pursuing CWSRF funding
2015	Solid Waste & ECED assisted the mayor

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE (CONT).

DATE	ACTIVITY
2/24/2015	Inquiry About Obtaining A Solid Waste Permit. Emailed the mayor information on obtaining a Solid Waste Permit. Provided contact information on engineer in the Environmental Permitting Division Solid Waste Permitting Branch
2016-2017	Site clean-up began
12/06/2016	Inquiry about re-use of property in Charleston, MS. Referred to Trent Jones
08/15/2017	Municipal Environmental Workshop (to educate the mayor and the board on environmental topics that impact their community)
08/16/2017	Natural Resources – Potential use for the remediated property. MSU Extension coordinator in Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture

Mayor’s Quote

Through collaboration with the OCE, Mayor Smith worked with the agency’s regulatory branch and developed a strategy to assist the city with closing and cleaning the site as well as secured grant funding to assist with the cleaning.

“The generosity shown by you and your staff was true compassion for strengthening the City of Charleston and appreciated beyond measure. Thank you for working on our behalf to provide much-needed resources and key MDEQ personnel connections to assist in identifying and addressing environmental threats in our community. Your support and efforts to improve the quality of life will have a long-standing impact on the citizens here.” ~ Honorable Sedrick Smith, Sr., Mayor, City of Charleston

