

*Smith to attend “the 7<sup>th</sup> Governor’s Symposium on North America’s Hunting Heritage,” which would coincide with the dates of that year’s annual SCI meeting.*

However, in a discussion with two of the FWS law enforcement officials, both labored under the impression that their attendance at the annual SCI meeting was within the purview of their duties. One of the FWS law enforcement officials, who also attended the December 2004 SCI meeting, advised that he had vouchered his trip to the government. Another FWS law enforcement official stated that a third FWS law enforcement official of Texas had attended, and he had signed off on his voucher as well. *Agent’s note: A review of the third FWS law enforcement official’s travel voucher shows a different official’s signature for the approving official. The purpose of the trip is stated as “Performance of official duties of the Fish and Wildlife Service, including meeting attendance.”*

### **The Bison Hunt on the Ranch**

A rancher friend of David Smith and member of SCI was interviewed regarding Smith’s hunt at his ranch. He advised that he is the owner of a ranch used primarily for noncommercial and charity hunting. According to him, this is not a commercial ranch, and he never charges anyone to come and hunt on the property. The rancher advised that in the past few years, SCI has been holding their annual meetings at his ranch. According to him, it is typical for the incoming SCI president to arrange the event and to take care of the invitations to those outside SCI that they would want to attend. He explained that each year SCI invites members of FWS as well as members of local law enforcement and certain sportsmen to the event.

The rancher maintained that David Smith had attended SCI’s annual meeting, which took place over the weekend of December 3, 2004, at the ranch, and that he also recalled someone else from FWS in attendance, although he could not remember the name.

When asked about the shooting of the bison, the rancher stated that there was an aging bison on his ranch that had become “semi-domesticated” but whose health was failing due to old age. According to the rancher, one could practically walk up and pet the animal. He recalled that David Smith was awarded the honor of shooting the bison and that Smith and a group of others had taken a vehicle out to where the bison was located. He said Smith had administered a “brain shot”—that is, a shot to the eye socket to induce a quick kill. The rancher said that Smith would have probably taken the shot from around 30 to 40 yards away. The rancher was asked if he was present when Smith shot the bison. He said he could not remember.

When asked what had happened to the hide, meat, and skull of the bison, the rancher said he could not remember but that he typically donates the meat to charity. The rancher advised that he would have probably thrown away the hide and that someone could have taken the skull if they had wanted to. When asked again, the rancher stated that it was possible that some of the meat was distributed among the guests and that David Smith could have possibly taken the bison’s skull. According to the rancher, had Smith taken the skull, it would have been sent directly to his taxidermist. The rancher advised that if this were the case, the taxidermist would have billed the rancher, and the rancher would have, in turn, billed Smith. The rancher said Smith’s check would have been made out to either the ranch or another company owned by him. When asked, the rancher stated that he had no idea what Smith did with the skull.