

had been similar meetings like the one with the taxidermist with other business owners. He replied, "Probably not." When asked whether he overheard Smith or someone else saying that Memphis and Louisville designations would be held up if Houston did not also get designated, the FWS supervisory law enforcement official said he could not recall ever hearing any such statement.

The taxidermist was interviewed by the OIG. He advised that, prior to meeting with the three law enforcement officials on October 9, 2003, he had been lobbying to get Houston designated. The taxidermist stated that he had probably sent letters to the Department as well as to his brokerage firm in an attempt to get Houston designated but could not provide investigators with copies of these letters. He stated that he had also placed phone calls to individuals at the Department and that David Smith could have been one of the people he called. He said he also would meet with different individuals about this matter whenever he was in Washington, D.C., including David Smith. Although he could not recall a definitive conversation with Smith concerning this issue, the taxidermist stated that it "finally fell on David's ears" that Houston needed to be designated.

According to taxidermist, he was surprised that two FWS law enforcement officials came down to see him. He said they discussed a variety of issues at the meeting, including a recent change to port policy. He said they also briefly discussed the designation of the Houston port. The taxidermist stated that he informed the two FWS law enforcement officials of the importance of designating Houston as a port.

When asked what his relationship is with David Smith, the taxidermist stated that they were friends and had known each other for many years. He maintained that he did a lot of taxidermy work for Smith.

When David Smith was initially interviewed concerning these allegations, he stated that he first heard mention of the Houston port during a hunting symposium in Houston in either December 2002 or 2003. Smith stated that he was approached by individuals who wanted to know why Houston was not a designated port. According to Smith, he had not realized the port was not designated until these individuals brought it to his attention. When asked if the taxidermist had been one of these individuals, Smith advised that the taxidermist did attend the symposium and that it was possible they had some discussion about the issue, although Smith said he could not recall any specific details. When Smith returned to Washington, he said he went to Kevin Adams and asked him why Houston was not designated. According to Smith, Adams explained that Houston's designation had been considered in the past, particularly when Anchorage had been designated, but that it had never gone through. According to Smith, that was the extent of his conversation with Adams concerning the port at that time. Smith stated that he was not involved in the actual designation process – that, in fact, the next he heard of Houston's pending designation was when he received the proposed ruling for the designation signed on April 22, 2004, by Assistant Secretary Craig Manson, Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Smith advised that he signed the final public rule designating the Houston port on November 29, 2004, and it was published in the Federal Register on December 6, 2004. According to Smith, Houston was the third largest city in the United States, and he knew it was a large seaport in overall tonnage, and he stated that information was sufficient to make the decision to designate the port and that it was a "no-brainer."