The RecFIN Technical Committee would like to advise the Council on a number of activities the Committee and its Subcommittees have been working on during 2006. It is our hope to make a presentation at the March Council meeting addressing these issues in greater detail. We would request direction from the Council and/or its Management Teams, Advisory Panels and the Scientific and Statistical Committee on a number of recreational data and sampling items.

The main issues we plan to address in March are as follows: a) review of the RecFIN Workshop held August 28-31, 2006 in Portland, Oregon and a status of its recommendations; b) a review of recreational data elements collected in the field sampling programs compared to the lists of desired elements submitted by the PFMC’s GMT and SSC, and stock assessment biologists; c) a proposal from RecFIN on procedures to handle average weights by species for conversion of landings to metric tons; d) procedures for recording discards in the three states and applying mortality rates to them for the discard component of total recreational harvest by species; e) a proposal to manage recreation catch by numbers of fish in place of metric tons; f) a presentation on the comparison study of effort estimates between the current RecFIN sampling programs and the historic Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) so as to better interpret historic landings in the RecFIN database; and g) review of the National Research Council Report on recreational sampling methods and the current and planned responses to their recommendations.

The RecFIN Technical Committee held its fall meeting on October 18-19, 2006 and addressed a plan for presenting the above items to the Council in March, 2007. As a prelude to these presentations, the following brief information is provided on these issues:

**RecFIN Workshop:** Fifty people attended the RecFIN Workshop in August, 2006 in Portland, OR. The methods for the five state sampling programs for recreational fisheries in California, Oregon and Washington were presented and discussed over a day and a half. A presentation from Alaska on their recreational sampling programs was also included. In the next two days, the workshop discussed the data elements requested by management entities with those collected in the various sampling programs. It was decided these should be
presented in a tabular form by RecFIN to better visualize the differences. Discussions also took place on how discarded fish are tallied and how average weights are generated by the states and RecFIN (for fish that are not observed) to determine metric tons landed. The recommendations from the National Research Council (NRC) Report on recreational sampling methods were discussed and Pacific Coast responses to each item were formulated. The RecFIN Technical Committee will follow up on recommendations and discussions from the Workshop to consider changes to procedures and/or data collected and how it is processed.

Recreational Data Elements: The recreational data elements presented by the PFMC’s GMT and SSC and those of the stock assessment biologists were discussed at the RecFIN Workshop. The RecFIN Technical Committee also discussed these at their October meeting and will prepare a spreadsheet in the next month to better analyze any differences or gaps in these lists. The result of this comparison will be discussed in our March, 2007 report.

Average Weight Computations: The average weight computation methods were discussed at the RecFIN Workshop as well as the October RecFIN Technical Committee meeting. The primary challenge is determination of an appropriate average weight for discarded fish that are not observed as to exact species or size. Methods employed by the various state sampling programs will be discussed in our March report. It is the desire of RecFIN to standardize this as much as possible between the various state sampling programs.

Recording Discards: The methods used in the three states to tally discarded fish in the sampling programs were presented at the RecFIN Workshop and discussed again at the October RecFIN Technical Committee meeting. Again, it is the desire of RecFIN to standardize these methods as much as possible in the various state sampling programs. The current PFMC GMT procedure is to apply mortality rates to discarded fish. In March RecFIN will propose standardizing discards in the various sampling programs and mortality rates for non-managed species to make the program currently used consistent between all states in the database. We will request endorsement of recommended changes to our proposal from the Council and its entities.

Managing by Numbers: The RecFIN workshop and the RecFIN Technical Committee discussed proposing using numbers of fish for the recreational catch quotas set by the Council. We will address this in our March report. In very brief terms it would entail converting the metric ton allocation for the recreational fishery to numbers of fish by using an average weight by species from past data to convert to numbers of fish. The monthly catch estimates would be reported in numbers and an average weight from that months sampled fish
compared to the one used to convert the MT allocations to numbers of fish to assure it is tracking close to the average weight used for the conversion.

Current RecFIN/MRFSS Effort Comparisons: As the Council is aware, when we changed sampling methods in mid-2003 and 2004 in the three states, NMFS continued to conduct the MRFSS household telephone survey on the Pacific coast so that an analysis of the historic MRFSS estimation procedures could be compared to the current sampling program effort estimations. The purpose of this duplication was to see how best to interpret historic landings data in RecFIN database back to 1980 with the current sampling methods and estimates. The RecFIN Statistical Subcommittee has been working for some time on this comparison in an effort to determine the many various comparisons that would be made and waiting to obtain at least a couple of years of data for the comparison. This report will be completed sometime in 2007. We hope to have specific data concerning its status in our March, 2007 report to the Council.

National Research Council Report: The NRC report – “Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods” was published in June, 2006. A summary of the reports recommendations was discussed at the RecFIN Workshop. A Pacific coast response to the recommendations in relation to the three states sampling programs was formulated at the RecFIN Workshop. This summary was taken to a meeting in Denver, Colorado the week following the workshop. The meeting was sponsored by NMFS as the first of a number of meetings to address the recommendations from the NRC report. This first meeting mainly brought managers and scientists together to lay out a plan for reviewing the recommendations and involving managers, scientists, and fishermen in the review process. The three Interstate Commission directors are serving with NMFS personnel on a steering committee to focus the future meetings to address sampling changes and outreach concerning the recommendations from the report and involve all participants in the various working groups. RecFIN and the Pacific coast position is that any work should be regionally focused to appropriate issues of specific local sampling programs. Additional information on this process and the various working groups to be established will be presented in our March report to the Council.

Russell Porter
RecFIN Technical Committee Chairman
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission