

1999 Operations Plan
for the
Fisheries Information Network
in the Southeastern United States
FIN

by: FIN Committee

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Number 65

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Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 1999 to December 31, 1999

I. INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) establishes a state-federal cooperative program to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the commercial and recreational fisheries of the Southeast Region. There are two separate programs under the FIN: the Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)].

The FIN is a cooperative state-federal marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the FIN Framework Plan for 1999. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial and recreational fisheries statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region¹ and to support the development and operation of a national program.

The goals of the FIN are:

- @ planning, management, and evaluation of data collection and management activities;
- @ implementation of data collection activities;
- @ establishment and maintenance of a data management system; and
- @ support for establishment of a national program.

The goals and objectives of FIN are found in Appendix A.

¹The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

III. OPERATIONS

A. Data Collection and Management

Ongoing marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys will be conducted by various state and federal agencies. The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees will review and evaluate progress towards integration of the surveys into the FIN.

B. Committee and Work Group Activities (see Section E for membership)

The tasks below cover all 1999 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denoted a ComFIN activity; a 'R' denoted a RecFIN(SE) activity; and a 'F' denoted a FIN activity.

Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 2000 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2000 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.

Team Members: FIN Committee.

Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 2000.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: 2000 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by late summer 1999 and addressed by the Committee at the fall 1999 meeting.

Task 2: Development of a Program Design Document (Goal 1, Objective 1) (F)

Objective: Develop a program design document for FIN

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: Using the information developed from the Committee and various work groups, the Committee has drafted a plan which will be used by the program partners to implement FIN. The draft document was presented to the Committee in 1998. The Committee will continue working on refining the document as the program develops. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: Program design document

Schedule: The Committee will continuing working on this issue and will address the progress at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 3: Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish MRF Surveys (Goal 1, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Support the establishment of long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group
Approach: The Work Group will work in conjunction with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (PRDNER) and U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife (USVIDFW) to develop marine recreational fishery surveys (MRF) in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. The PRDNER is currently working on project to implement a MRF survey in Puerto Rico. The Work Group will be working with the Department as well as USVIDFW to develop a coordinated survey. The group will first focus on the development of a site register and then direct their attention to the type of method(s) that should be used to collect MRF data in the Caribbean. The group will later address the development of a document to secure funding for the activity.
Resources: Travel, copy and mailing expenses and staff time.
Product: Develop of a MRF survey outline for the Caribbean.
Schedule: The work group met in 1998 and will continue working on this task in 1999.

Task 4: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.
Team Members: FIN Committee and staff.
Approach: The Committee will distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties documented by a request log. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the staff. In addition, the MRFSS staff has developed a home page where users are able to access the MRFSS data for their use. The user is able to specify the area, species, gear, etc. that he/she is interested in obtaining. Also, the GSMFC has developed a home page which includes information concerning the FIN.
Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.
Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning FIN and a report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff. This information is included in the FIN Annual Report.
Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

Task 5: Establishment of Educational Work Group (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Establish an educational work group to develop and design an outreach program for FIN
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: The Committee needs to set up an educational work group who will be tasked will developing an outreach program for FIN. The group will be charged with identifying the types of end users and compiling a list of these users for the fisheries data; developing and

disseminating program information that provides notification of accomplishments to the public; and developing other pertinent outreach materials.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: FIN outreach program

Schedule: The Committee will address this issue at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 6: Development of a Generic Trip Ticket Program (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Develop a generic trip ticket program for the Southeast Region.

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

Approach: Using the data element matrix which identifies data gaps in the Southeast Region, the licensing document, and the non-reported landings schematics, the Work Group will continue to design and refine a modular trip ticket program that can be used by agencies interested in implementing a trip ticket program in their jurisdiction. The program outlines the necessary elements for a successful trip ticket program. Accomplished by meeting, telephone, mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: Trip ticket program design

Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 1997 and will continue working on it during 1999.

Task 7: Development of the Discards, Releases, and Protected Species Interactions Modules (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Develop the discards, releases, and protected species interactions modules of the ComFIN.

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

Approach: Using information developed by the ACCSP and other pertinent information, the Work Group will design a data collection module for the compilation of discards and protected species interactions for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program will outline the data elements that need to be collected for compilation of discards and protected species interactions. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: Discard, Releases, and Protected Species Interactions collection program

Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 1998 and will continue working on it during 1999.

Task 8: Development of the Social/Economic Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Develop the social/economic module for the ComFIN.
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group
Approach: Using information developed by the ACCSP and other pertinent information, the Work Group will design a data collection module for the compilation of social/economic information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program will outline the data elements required for each fishery component that need to be collected for compilation of social/economic data. The ASMFC Committee on Economic and Social Sciences has addressed the identification of necessary commercial and recreational social and economic data elements. The ASMFC Committee has produced a document which outlines the minimum data elements for the social and economic aspects of fisheries for the harvesting sector. It is recommended that the Social and Economic Work Group work with the ASMFC Committee in the further development of data collection activities for the other aspects of the fisheries. The Committee agree to include members of the Work Group on the ACCSP committee for social and economic issues. This module will be similar to the market module. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: Social/Economic data collection module and data collection surveys for collection of the data.

Schedule: The Work Group begin addressing this issue during 1998 and will continue working on it during 1999.

Task 9: Development of Data Collection Procedures Document (Goal 2, Obj 2) (C)

Objective: Develop a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.

Team Members: Data Collection Procedures Work Group

Approach: The work group developed a draft document which describes the various techniques and methods for collection of marine commercial data. The group utilized existing procedures for the Trip Interview Program and other related information. The group, in conjunction with the Committee, will continue to develop this document and the program evolves.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: Procedures document

Schedule: The work group met in 1998 to address this issue and will continue working on it during 1999.

Task 10: Biological/Environmental Data Elements (Goal 2 , Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Compile metadata for inclusion into a metadata database for the Southeast Region.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has worked on this issue in the past and has developed a criteria for creating a metadata database. The Committee discussed the issue of metadata and decided that the Work Group should continue looking at compilation of fishing regulations in 1999. The work Group will meet in 1999 and continue working on this issue. Subsequent categories to be collected will be determined by the Committee.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Development of metadata database

Schedule: The initial compilation of data will begin in 1998 and this will be an ongoing activity.

Task 11: Commercial Quality Assurance and Quality Control (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Identify and determine standards for commercial catch/effort data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group.

Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of commercial catch/effort data. Review and expand the quality assurance and quality control document developed by the Biological/Environmental Work Group. This expanded document will encompass all quality assurance and quality control standards for the FIN. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: FIN Quality assurance and quality control document.

Schedule: The commercial aspects of the document will be addressed in 1999. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 12: Development of Quality Assurance and Quality Control Methods (Goal 2, Obj 3) (F)

Objective: Identify and determine standards for commercial and recreational sociological and economic data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.

Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group.

Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of commercial and recreational social and economic data. The Committee decided

that a mail survey section will be developed for the document. Also, the Work Group will review and expand the quality assurance and quality control document developed by the Biological/Environmental Work Group and added the necessary information, where appropriate. This expanded document will encompass all quality assurance and quality control standards for the FIN. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: FIN Quality assurance and quality control document.
Schedule: The Work Group reviewed the current document in 1998 and the work group will meet in 1999 to develop this section of the document. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 13: Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Implement an annual review process including guidelines for reviewing the data, through the RecFIN(SE), to evaluate MRFSS data.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee/MRFSS staff
Approach: The Committee approved a process for reviewing the MRFSS preliminary data which was presented in 1998. It was decided that MRFSS staff will set up automated e-mail messaging for notifying program participants regarding changes to the preliminary data as well as when the data becomes final.
Resources: Meeting costs/travel, mail costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Process for MRFSS data finalization.
Schedule: The data evaluation will be an ongoing task. The automated processes are being implemented.

Task 14: Port Samplers Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Convene a workshop of state and federal port samplers to discuss commercial data collection activities
Team Members: State and federal commercial port samplers and staff.
Approach: In an effort to provide a forum for discussing various issues concerning commercial data collection activities, the ComFIN Committee decided to convene a workshop of state and federal port agents. A similar meeting was conducted in 1998 and the group wished to continue holding these meetings. The workshop will be attended by the state and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, the ComFIN chairman, appropriate NMFS staff and other interested personnel. Some of the suggested topics for next meeting includes Crevalle jack identification workshop, overview of ComFIN program, trip ticket

information, regulations, ways to build better rapport with dealers, sampling and sub-sampling techniques.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: Provide a forum for field personnel to discuss problems and issues related to commercial data collection activities. List of recommendations regarding commercial data collection activities.

Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for mid-1999.

Task 15: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current and future programs for meeting FIN standards.

Team Members: FIN Committee.

Approach: Periodically evaluate surveys based on their adequacy for meeting FIN standards and make appropriate recommendations.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Report containing recommendations for commercial and recreational surveys as well as an evaluation and report on recommendations.

Schedule: In 1999, the Alabama representative will provide a presentation to the Committee concerning the their inshore creel survey. This presentation will be conducted at the spring 1999 meeting. Continue reviewing commercial and recreational surveys. This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 16: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management efforts.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has identified redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region and provided recommendations to the RecFIN(SE) Committee concerning these activities. One of the areas identified included a comparison of cost between the Mississippi Creel Survey and the MRFSS. From this information, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts in the Southeast Region.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts.

Schedule: This is an ongoing task. The cost benefit analysis between the Mississippi Creel Survey and the MRFSS may be addressed in 1999, depending on availability of personnel and funds.

Task 17: Determination of Catch and Effort for Non-Rod-and-Reel Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch and effort of shellfish and finfish harvested using non-rod-and-reel methods.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee

Approach: The list of non-rod-and-reel recreational fisheries and related sampling programs in the Southeast Region was developed by the Committee. The Committee modified the list to provide more detailed information and from this, the Committee will develop/modify sampling programs to collect this information. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Recommendations regarding non-hook-and-line recreational fisheries

Schedule: Staff will distribute a letter asking program participants to assess the magnitude of non-rod-and-reel fisheries in their states. This task will be addressed at the 1999 spring meeting.

Task 18: Determination of Catch and Effort from Private Access Sites (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch rates and species composition from private access groups.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Work Group has developed criteria for defining private access sites, compile of list of potential sources of information, and began developing a process for compiling information regarding private access sites. This year, the Work Group/Committee will continue developing a methodology for compiling this information. Once this information is collected, the Committee will develop a method for determining catch rates and species composition from private access groups. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: List of private access points for recreational fisheries

Schedule: This task was addressed in 1998 and Work Group will meet in 1999 and continue addressing this issue. A report will be presented at the 1999 spring meeting.

Task 19: Determination of Catch Rates and Species Composition from Night Fishing (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch rates and species composition from night fishing.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Work Group met in 1998 and presented the results to the Committee. The Committee asked that more information be

examined by the Work Group to determine the distribution and magnitude of night fishing by state. Once this is complete, the Committee will develop a methodology for determining catch rates and species composition for night fishing. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Methodology of collecting data during night fishing activities
Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1999 spring meeting.

Task 20: Collection of Tournaments Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Collect appropriate information from fishing tournaments, and integrate with other MRF data.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: A list that identifies all ongoing tournaments in the Southeast Region has been compiled and reviewed by the Committee. The next step is the Work Group will identify and recommend data requirements and consistent methodologies for tournament sampling. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Recommendations regarding sampling methods for tournaments

Schedule: The Committee addressed this issue in 1998 and the Work Group will meet in 1999 to continue examining this issue. This task will be addressed at the 1999 spring meeting.

Task 21: Implementation of Methods to Monitor the For-Hire Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Identify evaluate, and test methodologies to survey charter and head boat fisheries.

Team Members: Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee

Approach: The purpose of this task is to make comparisons between various methods for estimating charter boat effort, catch per trip, and total catch. The three methods that will be compared are the current MRFSS method, a captain's telephone survey, and a log panel survey. All methods will be conducted simultaneously and the results will be compared to determine the best methods for estimating effort in the charter boat fishery. The evaluation of the data from these methods will be conducted based on various criteria. The pilot phase of the project has been extended until December 1998. In addition, the ACCSP is planning a similar study in South Carolina to compare the MRFSS, captain phone, and mandatory logbook methodologies.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Participation in the Charter boat Pilot Survey to determine the best methodology for surveying charter boats.

Schedule: This is multi-year task. The testing of the methodologies began in September 1997 and will be completed in December 1998. The evaluation of the methods will be begin in early 1999.

Task 22: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the FIN requirements.
Team Members: FIN Committee.
Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys to the appropriate personnel.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task 23: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a plan which outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year as well as tracking of the collection for these data.
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: The Committee has developed a data collection planning process which identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities. The plan will provide guidance to the states, NMFS, and FWS for the development of funding mechanisms that are implemented to provide funding support for collecting the data. During the fall meeting, the Committee will conduct an evaluation of the adherence to prior year's plan and final review of prior year's data. A RFP was been developed to begin compiling information for stock assessment. In addition, the Committee will utilize a data tracking process to determine whether the identified data has been collected. Accomplished by telephone and mail.
Resources: Mail cost, telephone costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Data collection plan
Schedule: The RFP is currently being developed and will be discussed by the Committee at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 24: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.
Team Members: FIN Committee.
Approach: The FIN program partners will report to the Committee any new technologies which will aid in the collection of marine commercial

and recreational fisheries data. Also, have appropriate personnel report to the Committee concerning such advancements.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Progress reports concerning pen-based and other data collection technologies.

Schedule: At the spring 1999 meeting, the Texas representative will provide a presentation regarding the electronic data loggers currently being used for the data collection in their creel survey. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 25: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: To design, implement, and maintain an marine commercial and recreational fisheries data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).

Team Members: FIN and ACCSP program partners.

Approach: The ACCSP is currently developing a data management system for the Atlantic coast. Since the FIN and ACCSP have been designed to be compatible and comparable, the FIN will utilize the data management system being developed for the ACCSP. FIN personnel will be involved in meetings of the ACCSP Computer Technical Committee to ensure that FIN has input into the design of the system.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: FIN data management system

Schedule: The ACCSP system is being prototyped in Florida and the Northeast in 1998. The FIN will begin addressing this issue at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 26: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Develop standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.

Team Members: FIN/ACCSP program partners

Approach: The ACCSP is currently developing a data management system for the Atlantic coast. As part of the development, standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application are being developed. Through the involvement with the ACCSP Computer Technical Committee, the FIN will provide input into the development of this information. In addition, the FIN Committee has tasked an ad hoc work group to begin looking at standard codes for species, gear, etc. This work group will work closely with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility among programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Standard protocols and documentation for the FIN data management system.
Schedule: The ACCSP system is being developed and the FIN will begin addressing this issue at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 27: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies which will aid in the management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data. Also, industry personnel will report to the Committee concerning such advancements.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Progress reports.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task 28: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1) (F)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.
Team Members: FIN Committee.
Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will attend Pacific RecFIN, PacFIN, ACCSP Operations Committee, and ASMFC Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics meetings and coordinate activities as appropriate. Accomplished by mail and meetings.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Record of coordination activities.
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 29: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative Marine Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Coordinate FIN with other regional cooperative marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs and encourage consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.
Team Members: FIN Committee/ FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group
Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Pacific RecFIN, and PacFIN on the West Coast. The MRFSS staff is revising data files and will get input from the RecFIN(SE) Committee. The FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work

Group was created to examine the differences/similarities between the FIN and ACCSP. It was decided that this group would meet on an annual basis to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. Distribute appropriate program results and recommendations to other cooperative fisheries programs. The topic of a joint meeting among FIN, ACCSP and Pacific has been discussed and staff will examine the possibility of conducting these types of meetings. Accomplished by mail and meetings.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Ensure adequate information exchange, consistency and comparability between all regional fisheries programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity. The Work Group will meet in mid-1999.

C. Administrative Activities

Coordination and administrative support of FIN will be accomplished through The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. Major tasks involved in the coordination and administration of the various levels of FIN include but are not limited to the following:

- @ Work closely with the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;
- @ Implement plans and program directives approved by the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees;
- @ Provide coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees, subcommittees, and work groups;
- @ Develop and/or administer cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts;
- @ Serve as liaison between the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees, other program participants, and other interested organizations;
- @ Assist the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees in preparation or review of annual spending plans;
- @ Prepare annual operations plans under the direction of the FIN Committee;
- @ Prepare and/or supervise and coordinate preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings;
- @ Distribute approved ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures as set forth by the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees;

- @ Assist in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) activities;
- @ Seek funding for ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) activities as the need develops; and
- @ Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

D. Time Table

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Establish senior-level policy board			X		
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Support establishment of MRF surveys in PR & VI		X	X	X	X
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Identify funding sources	X	X	X	X	X
Review of legislation					X
Develop funding mechanism for short-term projects					X
Information dissemination					
Establish educational work group				X	
Establish commercial and recreational user advisory panel		X			
Process for notification of program accomplishments				X	
Develop outreach materials and list of users				X	
Use Internet communications	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					
Conduct program review					X
Data Collection					
Data components					
Review of components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Develop process for metadata		X	X	X	X
Collection of metadata			X	X	X
Develop social/economic data module		X	X	X	X
Develop catch/effort modules		X	X	X	X
Identify recreational social/economic data elements		X			
Use existing social/economic panels for RecFIN(SE)			X		
Identify other social scientists to participate in RecFIN(SE)			X		
Standard data collection protocols					
Develop data collection procedures manual			X	X	
Develop standard codes for species, gear, etc.				X	
Calculate precision estimate for Head boat Survey					X
Determine precision levels for priority species			X		
Evaluate methods for achieving desired precision levels				X	
Quality control/assurance					
Develop commercial QA/QC standards				X	X
Develop recreational QA/QC standards		X	X	X	X
Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards					X
Recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management		X			
Evaluate compatibility of Texas Survey data			X		
Coordination of data collection					
Development of data collection plan		X	X	X	X
Develop list of stock assessment methods					X
Identify uses of fishery independent data					X
Assess duplication of effort between fishery-dependent and -independent activities					X
Evaluate current fishery independent data activities					X
Make recommendations to appropriate fishery independent programs					X
Compile marine recreational licensing report		X			

Data Collection (continued)	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Develop recreational license sampling frame criteria		X			
Establish/modify recreational licenses to meet criteria			X	X	
Conduct comparison survey of license frame and MRFSS					X
Implement the appropriate methodology					X
Evaluate methods for surveying the for-hire fishery		X	X		
Test methods for surveying the for-hire fishery		X	X	X	
Determine methods for collecting recreational data for private access points			X	X	
Determine methods for collecting recreational catch data for night fishing			X	X	
Develop process for collecting needed commercial and recreational data on priority species			X	X	
Develop method for collecting recreational data on fishing tournaments			X	X	
Develop methods for collecting recreational data on non hook-&-line fisheries			X	X	
Evaluate the potential for stratifying at finer geographic levels				X	
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process			X		
Select preferred method for site selection process				X	
Evaluate methods to improve enforceability of reporting requirements				X	
Conduct comparison study between preferred and MRFSS methods					X
Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities					X
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data Management					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
Integration of data bases					
Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
Development of National Program					
Long-term planning					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

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APPENDIX A

FIN Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: To plan, manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.

Objective 1 To establish and maintain FIN, ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees consisting of MOU signatories or their designees to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the program.

Objective 2 To develop and periodically review a Framework Plan that outlines policies and protocol of the program

Objective 3 To develop annual operation plans, including identification of available resources, that implement the Framework Plan.

Objective 4 To distribute program information to the cooperators and interested parties.

Objective 5 To conduct a program review at least every five years of operation to evaluate the program's success in meeting needs in the Region.

Goal 2: To implement and maintain a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.

Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial and recreational fisheries and identify the required data priorities for each.

Objective 2 To identify and periodically review environmental, biological, social and economic data elements required for each fishery.

Objective 3 To identify, determine, and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training and quality assurance.

Objective 4 To identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.

Goal 3: To establish and maintain an integrated, marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system for the Region.

Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the FIN data management system.

Objective 2 To periodically evaluate the hardware, software and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.

Objective 3 To implement, maintain, and periodically review a marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs.

Objective 4 To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer dissemination, and application.

Objective 5 To identify and prioritize historical databases for integration into the marine commercial and recreational fisheries database.

Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.

Objective 7 To protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

Goal 4: To support the development and operation of an inter-regional program to collect, manage and disseminate marine commercial fisheries information for use by states, territories, councils, interstate commissions and federal marine fishery management agencies.

Objective 1 To provide for long-term inter-regional program planning.

Objective 2 To coordinate FIN with other regional and national marine commercial fisheries programs.

Objective 3 To encourage consistency and comparability among regional and national marine commercial fisheries programs over time.