**Online Survey of Central/South Central Texas Environmental Alliances**

**Project Description**

There are two organizational theories to explain the link between organizational structure and organizational goal outcomes. The behavioral perspective (Moe 1984) focuses on individuals and groups of individuals and views organizational behavior and the outcomes that result as the weighted outcome of interests and interactions between these individuals. The contractual perspective (Ostrom 1990) (Ostrom 1995) views the formation of an organization as a way of minimizing and internalizing the costs of gathering information, negotiation and bargaining costs. At the local level, community-based environmental alliances organize to address a delicate balance on environmental issues: economic development and environmental stewardship – the two pillars of sustainability. On the basis of the two perspectives mentioned, I have developed a survey that uses partnership formation to explain alliance members’ perceptions of success related to the environmental and socioeconomic outcomes of their actions. The survey measures the number of environmental and socioeconomic objectives met, and a number of independent variables associated with the size of the alliance, the governance structure of the alliance and the network ties/social relations within the alliance. I have identified a database of 56 Central/South Central Texas Environmental Alliances (to date) and developed a survey questionnaire which needs to be pilot tested and administered in its final form. The funds requested will support the administration of two online surveys which is the most cost effective way to survey partnership members which have a website presence: an online pilot test to at least four organizations with different ‘missions’ – advocacy, education, monitoring and negotiation/legislative and an online final survey to members of the environmental alliances which I have identified.

**Description of the Expected Outcome**

I expect that results from analyzing survey data will show which partnership characteristics are most beneficial to their perceptions of how effective their efforts to sustain the environmental and socioeconomic health of their communities have been and if certain combinations of partnership strengths and characteristics are aligned with the mission of the partnership as it is perceived. The conventional wisdom is that environmental alliances form around particular issues on an ad hoc basis. I expect the results of this study to indicate the extent to which certain organizational alliance structures are more effective at addressing particular issues.