

## **IMPORTANT: Rangeland Monitoring!!!**

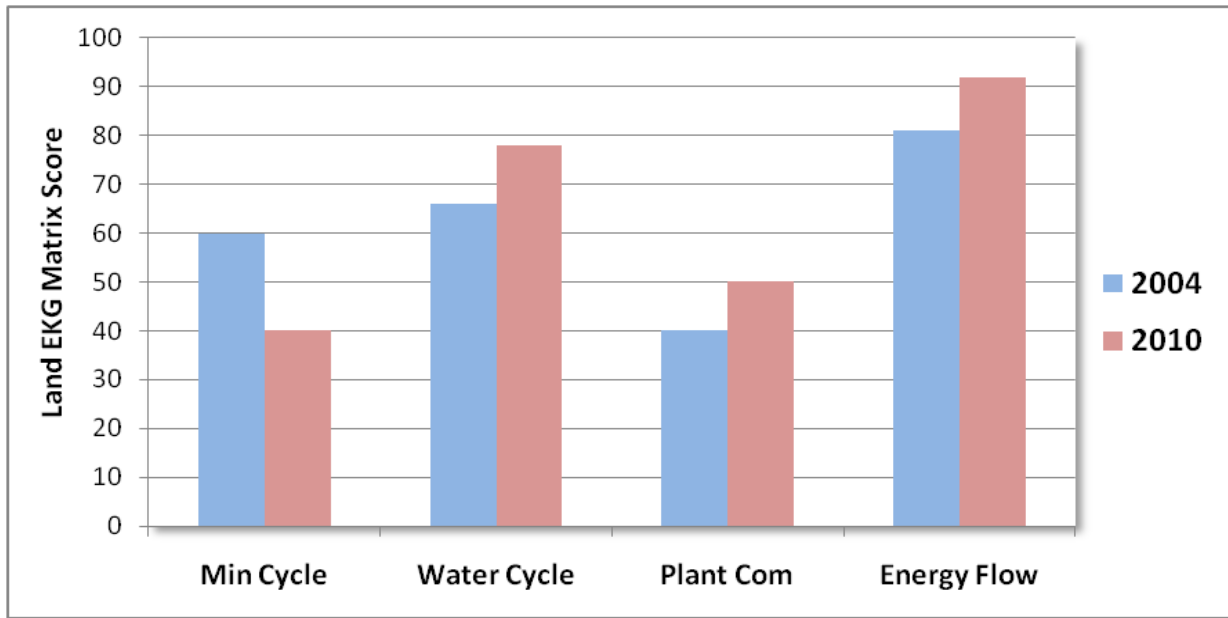
By Jessica Harris

High School Youth Forum – Billings, Montana – February 8, 2011

Representing the Colorado Section of the Society for Rangeland Management

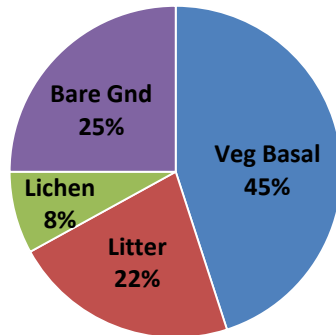
### **ABSTRACT:**

Rangeland monitoring is an essential part of Range Management. There are many reasons to practice rangeland monitoring but one of the most significant objectives is that land managers must keep track of how the land is affected by different management strategies. There are numerous methods of rangeland monitoring. Land EKG™ is a technique used on many ranches, specifically J&L Farms, owned and operated by John and Laura Negley located in Kiowa County, Colorado. Land EKG™ considers all four ecosystem foundation functions of mineral cycle, water cycle, living community succession, and energy flow. This method evaluates how these four systems are functioning on the rangeland. The beginning of the land monitoring process involves locating the beginning and ending points of the transect line. After locating the transect points, a two hundred foot tape is stretched between the two points. Four observation plots are predetermined points along the transect line. Photographs of the current conditions at the site are taken for documentation. Photographs are taken in both directions of the transect lines and at each of the four observation plots. Indicators of each of the four ecosystem functions are then evaluated and ranked according to the EKG™ evaluation scorecard. Data from the scorecard is then transferred to the EKG™ summary sheet. Plotting the value of each indicator, a chart similar to a human's heart EKG readout is created. By comparing different year's summary charts from the same transect location, the trend in rangeland health can be determined. From that comparison ranchers can determine if their management goals are being obtained or if necessary changes need to be made. Rangeland monitoring has shown improving conditions on the pastures of J&L Farms since their monitoring program began in 2003. Range monitoring is an important part of rangeland management. If the land isn't monitored, vital feedback information is missing. Ranchers can practice a range management plan on their ranch but if they don't watch to see how it affects the rangeland, the manager may never know whether or not the range management plan is improving or diminishing the health of the ecosystem. It's very important to monitor how management decisions influence rangeland health and sustain the many resource values derived from the land.



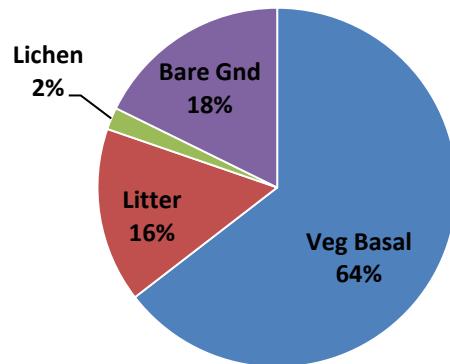
Negley Ranch EKG™ Transect T-2, Ecosystem Function Trend 2004-2010.

**2004**



Negley Ranch EKG™ Transect T-2, Ground Cover in 2004.

**2010**



Negley Ranch EGK Transect T-2, Ground Cover 2010.