Science Handout on Effects of Disasters on Ecosystems

An ecosystem is living and non-living things interacting in the environment.
Natural disasters such as hurricanes, tropical storms, tsunamis, and landslides have the potential to generate a tremendous amount of marine debris. The high winds, heavy rains, storm surge, and flooding associated with these disasters can pull large structures, household articles, and outdoor items into surrounding waters. Debri, garbage, can contribute to an outgrowth of algae which can lead to oxygen depletion. Fish may later die due to a lack of oxygen in the water.

- Local animals in the rivers etc. will migrate to another habitat.
- Organisms will die and disrupt the food chain.
- Drought affects flow of water and contributes to stagnation and growth of algae which leads to oxygen depletion and fish kills.
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Flooding can be part of the natural hydrological cycle and is essential to the ecosystems it affects. Hydrological connectivity between floodplains and rivers is maintained through flooding. When a river floods, it deposits nutrient rich sediment on the banks, and in turn washes bits of vegetation into the river that become food for aquatic organisms. Floods can also replenish lakes and ponds found within the floodplain and can raise the water table.

Match the vocab word to its meaning. Place the letters on the blank space.

_____1. Ecosystem	a) the state of not flowing or moving
_____ 2. Debris	b) living and non-living organisms in the environment
_____ 3. Aquatic	c) fill the bodies of water up again
_____ 4. Replenish	d) relating to water
_____ 5. Stagnation	e) garbage

Answer the following questions based on the passage above.

1. List some natural disasters that can generate marine garbage. _____, _____, _____, _____

2. What does debri do when it accumulates in the bodies of water?_____
_____

3. Sometimes fish die in the rivers. What causes this?_____

4. Is flooding good or bad to the bodies of water? Explain why._____
_____

5. What becomes food for aquatic organisms?_____

LIVEWORKSHEETS