Nov 29 Human Changes to Ecosystems

Directions: Read the text below, then fill out the table at the end of the page.

How do the interactions of people cause ecosystems to change? Human activities have a significant effect upon the biosphere, often in a negative way. However, some human changes to Earth's ecosystems can actually have a positive effect on living things.

For example, look at the picture to the right that shows a sunken boat. What has happened to this man-made object? It is now the foundation of a new coral reef.



Sunken boats are used to create artificial reefs to help rebuild a marine ecosystem's wildlife.

Negative Human Interactions Through industry, agriculture, and simple everyday activities, human interactions can have a negative impact on an ecosystem.

Look at the pictures to the right. What negative impact do you think each human activity has on the ecosystems involved? How do you think the ecosystems will change in response to the human interactions?





Oil spills and forest clearings are just two ways humans negatively impact natural environments.

The top picture shows the remnants of an oil spill that washed ashore. Oil spills damage marine habitats and can kill animal and plant species.

Deforestation, shown in the bottom picture, eliminates the habitats of various plant and animal species, which can cause endangerment and, in some cases, extinction.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Now it's your turn to practice. Consider the human interactions described in the left column of the chart below. Then, in the column on the right, explain any possible responding changes that may occur in the affected ecosystem.

Human Interactions	Responding Ecosystem Changes
Large sections of rain forest are burned to remove trees and create farmland.	
Pet boa constrictors are released into a forest when they become too large.	
Massive oil spill covers large area from the shoreline to deep waters 10 miles offshore.	
A hydroelectric power plant requires a dam. The resulting reservoir covers and submerges a nearby forest.	

LIVEWORKSHEETS