



Restoring the River Worksheet Answer Key

1. What types of pollution can harm freshwater fish?

Sediment pollution (e.g., silts, sands, etc.) clogs the gills of fish. Nutrient pollution (e.g., phosphorus, nitrogen, etc.) can cause algal blooms, which block sunlight from underwater plants, kill them, and reduce hiding places for fish. The decomposing plants and the algae itself also consume oxygen, reducing levels needed by fish for survival.

2. How can community members work together to protect river ecosystems from pollution? (Think about what students did to help restore shad in the Potomac River.)

Community members can plant trees to restore riparian forest buffers, thereby reducing the amount of pollution reaching rivers and streams. *Note: Other answers are possible. Refer to this and other Lessons in the Education Guide for possible responses.*

3. How can the loss of one animal or plant affect the loss of other animals or plants in the same ecosystem? Give an example.

The loss of life at the base of the food chain can have a domino effect throughout the ecosystem. If large numbers of copepods die, it can cause the loss of American shad, which in turn can cause the loss of largemouth bass and finally, of the blue heron. *Note: Examples may include any chain on "A Potomac River Food Web," but many more answers are also possible. Refer to "Diets of Potomac River Watershed Organisms" for additional examples.*