

Name: _____ Class: _____

Cycles in Nature Culminating Task: Water, Carbon, and Nitrogen... 3 Cycles in Nature NOT to be messed with!!

The Situation:

You are taking a walk along a stream bank in the woods with a friend. You notice typical woodsy characteristics, such as trees, birds singing, squirrels scampering, slithery things diving into the water to avoid you, the firm feel of the earth beneath your feet, the smell of decaying plant matter mixed with the freshness of the newly cleaned air. Your eye wanders from the highest canopy where the birds are reveling in the free space above the tree line, down the trunk of an ancient tree, skipping over to a small bush along the stream bank, and down into the stream's stagnant water. It's green. Mucky. Still. Wait...last time you were here, several years ago, the stream ran clear...with more speed. You take another look around. The underbrush of the woods was thicker, more lush. Why is the stream so slow? What is the mucky green stuff in the water? Where are all the different plants and animals which used to inhabit this lovely place?

The Problem:

As a curious and concerned citizen, you are determined to find out just what took place in the environment which caused the changes you observed in this lovely wooded ecosystem. You know nature operates on cycles, and ecosystems rely on the relationships between the living (biotic) organisms and nonliving (abiotic) factors. Your hunch is human activity interfering with the natural cycles in nature might have something to do with the puzzling changes to the stream and its environment.

