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## Marin salons collect hair to soak up gulf oil - but will it be used?

By Mark Prado  
Posted: 05/11/2010 04:21:35 PM PDT

Colored, crimped or coifed, it doesn't matter, as long as it's clean and absorbent.

Several Marin salons have begun collecting customers' hair for shipment to the Gulf of Mexico, where volunteers are gathering hair collected across the country to help absorb some of the thousands of gallons of oil gushing from the British Petroleum drilling rig.

"We have 10 boxes here ready to be shipped," said Nicole Hitchcock, co-owner of the NH2 Salon in Novato. "I think what is happening there makes us nervous like it does all Americans, it's disturbing. We want to help."

Hitchcock made contact with San Francisco-based Matter of Trust, an environmental nonprofit, which is working with salons and pet groomers across the country to send hair to warehouses in the Gulf region.

There, volunteers from a variety of organizations are stuffing the hair into tubes made of nylon stockings, which are tied together into booms. The booms are used to keep the oil from spreading onto land or into marine preserves.

"Simply put, we shampoo because hair collects oil," said Lisa Craig Gautier, executive director of Matter of Trust, in a written statement. "It soaks up skin oils, grabs oil from the pollution in the air, and it can soak up petroleum in oil spills."

The group is coordinating efforts of thousands of participants to match nylon and hair donations.

One problem: British Petroleum is not using the booms, and it is unclear if it will.

"BP may choose not to use our booms,"

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read a posting Tuesday on the Matter of Trust Facebook page. "All we can do is provide them with the opportunity to use these donated booms."

Another posting stated: "We are simply making and storing booms all along the Gulf for donation to BP. BP is solely responsible for deploying any booms they use and for the collection for their proper disposal."

BP officials could not be reached for comment.

Undeterred, Marin salons are forging ahead.

"We have always looked for alternative ways to use the hair, so this fits perfectly," said Martine Langsam, owner of Renaissance House of Beauty in San Rafael. "It's a great

feeling to be able to help and our clients love the fact that we are doing it."

One of those clients, Vera Grigorian of San Anselmo, is happy to see her hair used for the cause.

"It's a wonderful use of scrap hair," she said while at the shop Tuesday. "It seems like it would work very well and it's natural."

Contact Mark Prado via e-mail at [mprado@marinij.com](mailto:mprado@marinij.com)

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