

Guy Donated His Hipster Beard to Help Soak Up Future Oil Spills

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Shaving a longtime beard can be a total buzzkill.

But when it came time for Scott Boback to get rid of the facial hair that took 20 months to grow, he made the most of it by donating it to a good cause.



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Scott Boback pictured with his beard.

Boback, an associate professor of biology at [Dickinson College](#) in Carlisle, PA, donated his 9-inch beard (from the chin down) to [Matter of Trust](#), an environmental organization that, among a number of green initiatives, uses hair to help soak up oil after major spills.

Since 1999, the organization has collected hair clippings from salons and dog groomers through its [Clean Wave](#) program to make low-tech, tube-like devices called “hair booms.” They’re essentially pantyhose stuffed with hair.



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Boback understandably a little freaked out by his lack of beard after he cut it off.

A pound of hair can [absorb a quart of oil in one minute](#), Matter of Trust's co-founder, Lisa Craig Gautier told USA Today in 2010.

The same way that hair's rigid texture is able to [sop up natural skin oils](#), it's able to work to catch crude, The New York Times reported in 2010 after the BP oil spill.

The group started out using their hair "sausages" to help [clean up a number of small spills](#). The concept was put to a serious test in 2007, after the Cosco Busan, a container ship, hit a support tower in San Francisco's Bay Bridge and spilled [53,569 gallons](#) of intermediate fuel oil.



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A hair boom.

As for Boback's role in all of this, it's clear that he's motivated by both his love of the ocean *and* his wife.

"This is definitely something that I'm doing for my wife," Boback told Dickinson. "But I know that I can always grow it back."
