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How A Haircut Helps The Oil Spill

TAMPA - It's nearly summer, and for Madison the dog, that means a new do. But Madison's new haircut does more than make her sleek and summer ready: this time it could potentially save the lives of other animals.

"They float them in the water and they try to stop the oil from going through near estuaries and things like that," explained Jennifer Underwood with Country Chase Veterinary.

Country Chase Veterinary is just one of many locations in the Bay Area now collecting animal hair to give to a California-based organization called Matter of Trust. The group then stuffs the hair in nylon stockings which are used to soak up oil from spills all over the world, including the one in the Gulf of Mexico.

"It's neat. It's a great idea. I mean right now this (fur) is from one small dog, the pet hair that you see on the table and we throw it away," added Underwood.

The idea to use hair to help oil spills was born in 1989 when a hairdresser in Alabama saw how the Exxon-Valdez spill in Alaska soaked the fur of otters. Now, Matter of Trust coordinates with thousands of salons all over the country to collect human hair as well.

"We create about a pound a day," offered Anthony Bellapigni with Michael Angelo Hair Studio in Tampa.

In an attempt to become more eco-friendly, Bellapigni says they started collecting hair for Matter of Trust about 10 months ago. Now with the spill potentially in our backyard, their collections may not have far to go.

"We never thought that we would actually be using this here. We knew that it was going to benefit somebody somewhere in the world, but never thought that we would be in this situation in Florida," added Bellapigni.

Matter of Trust says 300,000 pounds of hair and fur are cut daily. Now Madison's haircut does more than make her look good, it could help save the fur and life of another animal.

If you'd like to know more about matter of trust or donate to the organization, you can visit their web site: www.matteroftrust.org

