

# A golden parachute?

**Innovator Scot Weiss is motivated to make a difference - and now, an invention that he's spent years working on is getting big attention for its help with the Gulf oil spill cleanup.**

Weiss's invention, the patent pending Parachute Skimmer, was originally designed to pick up debris and dirt from the surface of the water in pools and small waterways.

As Weiss puts it: "In times of crisis innovation becomes essential."

The Parachute Skimmer is a simple, hand operated, tool, which Weiss coins 'the Push Broom' for the water. The top part of the device floats and the bottom part sinks below the surface, while material in between captures oil, tar balls and soiled debris as it is pulled through the water. Oil absorption material is placed into the device and allows the user to steer the device and control the direction of the absorption material through the water. The device not only captures the surface oil, but also captures the subsurface tar balls and soiled debris as well.

This is the first device that allows oil absorption material to be controlled and manoeuvred through the water. Once full, the reusable device is removed from the water capturing the oil and tar. The soiled absorption material is replaced and the tool is ready for use again. The Parachute Skimmer is much more efficient than traditional devices and it allows workers to pick up the oil with minimal direct contact so it is also safer for clean-up crews to use.

"I always knew my invention had the potential to contribute to society in a positive way," says Weiss. He just didn't know how. Then, after seeing the pictures of the BP oil spill and the damage to the Gulf beaches, Weiss knew he needed to reach out.

So, he took Skimmers to Louisiana, Alabama and the Florida panhandle, offering his support to the workers tasked with cleaning the oil from the waters and the sand. He knew it was a long shot - after all, even the government was struggling with the best way to organise the cleanup response! But he had faith in the product, and was able to find a subcontractor willing to give it a try.

Scot's persistence paid off. From more than 20,000 ideas and submissions to BP and the Coast Guard the Parachute Skimmer was one of only approximately 100 or so that made it for further review. BP and the Coast Guard initially purchased 10 demo units of the Parachute Skimmer, and he has received EPA approval from the state of Florida.

The Coast Guard's evaluation and testing won enthusiastic reviews. The Parachute Skimmer is now in the official master database of products available for operational teams to purchase. His next steps are to create more awareness in the industry about this new, innovative tool and to find an investor to help bring the Parachute Skimmer to the international marketplace.

*More information on the device is available at [www.parachuteskimmer.com](http://www.parachuteskimmer.com).*



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