

Make Your Own Bike Trailer Workshop

Hokitika June 2008

By Steven Muir

Department of Conservation staff in Hokitika wanted to promote awareness of carbon emissions for World Environment Day and so they organised a workshop to make bike trailers so that locals could carry loads more easily without using their cars. The workshop was held in DOC's workshop facilities on June 7th 2008, which was a very cold and rainy day, not that it mattered particularly as all construction work was indoors, but some of the test runs had to be timed in between the horizontal rain showers.



Darryl constructing his trailer



And with his trailer completed

Steven Muir, based in Christchurch, came over for the day with his pipe bender, aluminium tubing, recycle-crates, and all the hitches and bolts required to make the trailers. Ten trailers were constructed by people from up and down the Coast. The workshop started at 10am and it took a while for people to get to grips with the instructions, and for the pipe bender to get enough tubing bent for construction to start in earnest. In retrospect it would have been better for Steven to have bent the tube prior to the workshop and saved a significant amount of time. The advantage of bending on site is that oddball sizes of trailer can be more easily accommodated if required. As it happened everyone was happy with the standard size of trailer which was ideal for carrying the standard West Coast load of horse manure. Steven did wonder about having an extra set of recycle crates for the groceries, but a good hose down was generally deemed adequate.

The wheels used were mainly locally-sourced second-hand wheels (20-26"), some of which required re-greasing in the bearings which was done as part of the workshop, and they worked very well. The first trailer was completed around 3pm and the rest finished by around 5pm when the workshop ended.



Fitting wheels to the trailer



Steven demonstrating how to re-grease bearings.

The Department of Conservation received some funding to cover Steven's time and travel from Christchurch, as well as advertising costs and subsidising the costs of the materials. Participants paid a reduced amount for the bike trailer materials which normally cost around \$100. All in all the workshop worked very well and Steven would like to see other groups around NZ organise similar workshops to encourage sustainable transport among their members/communities. Contact Steven by email thepope@cyclingchurch.org.nz or phone 03 3658238. Further details of bike trailers are also available at www.cyclingchurch.org.nz.



DOC staff Jose and Inger work on their trailer.



A novel light weight flax deck system fitted to one of the trailers.