

## **CHaRM Now Accepting Bike Tires and Tubes for Recycling**

Did you make a “green” resolution on Earth Day? With gas prices as high as \$3.50 per gallon and spring officially here, perhaps you vowed to ride your bike for local errands, your daily commute or for exercise and feeling good. Riding your bicycle saves money on gasoline and vehicle maintenance, reduces air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions, and can help you burn nearly 500 calories per hour. But the more you ride your bike, the more wear and tear you put on your treads. Lucky for us, the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) in Boulder just added bike tires and tubes to its list of accepted “non-traditional” recyclables. The CHaRM works hard to accept at least one new hard-to-recycle material each year and this year kicked off Earth Day by adding these two materials to the list, once they’re beyond repair.

To recycle bike tires, CHaRM will use the same model as Colorado’s automotive tire recycling system and charge a small fee to cover the cost of collection and processing by local tire recyclers. Bike tires will cost 50 cents per bike tire to recycle. Eco-Cycle has partnered with a Denver recycler who makes crumb rubber to process the tires. Crumb rubber is produced by grinding up tires considerably more than the typical “shred” rubber chunks to the point where the processor is able to remove the steel and nylon materials found in tires. The finished rubber product is the size of pea gravel, or smaller, and is used for walking and jogging paths or athletic surfaces, usually with a layer of partially-melted rubber on top, which seals the surface and keep the crumbs from wandering. Crumb rubber is also being mixed with sand to produce an ideal surface for horse racing in horse arenas.

***Please note Eco-Cycle does NOT accept car tires at any location.*** Check the phone book for a listing of local auto tire businesses who will accept your used tires for a small fee per tire.

For the bicycle inner tubes, there is no charge for recycling. Eco-Cycle is collaborating with a Boulder company called Green Guru ([www.greenguru.com](http://www.greenguru.com)) to find new uses for materials rather than sending them to the landfill. Green Guru makes hip, eco-conscious products from used materials. They take the used inner bike tubes and sew them together to make courier bags, satchels and cases to accessorize your biking attire.

Quality control, to assure that Eco-Cycle can meet the stringent requirements of our markets, is critical for any material accepted at the CHaRM, as well as at our drop-off centers. CHaRM can accept all rubber bike tires and all rubber bike inner tubes, but they must be separated so they can be placed in separate containers. Hang on to the rim (but detach it from the tube and tire), as you can also recycle it as scrap metal at the CHaRM. If your inner tubes are puncture-resistant or if they have puncture-mending “slime” in them, please let the window staff know as they’ll need to be put into a different bin. CHaRM will only accept bike tires and tubes.

If your old bike tires and tubes usually end up with the bike mechanic at a local shop, ask the shop to call the CHaRM at 303-444-6634 to find out how to participate in this new program.

For a complete list of the “non-traditional” recyclable materials accepted, location and hours for the CHaRM, visit [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org) and click on the Hard-to-Recycle Center link on the left menu bar or give me a call at the Broomfield Recycling Center, 303-404-2839. If you don't see your item listed in the CHaRM guidelines, look to the upper right-hand pull-down menu on our webpage under “What do you want to recycle?” and choose your item for recycling, reuse or disposal options.

The development of these new markets to recover used bicycle tires and tubes is yet another loop we're closing and another step taken toward building a Zero Waste community. Happy cycling and recycling!

*Genevieve George is Eco-Cycle's Broomfield Outreach Coordinator. To learn more about recycling or the Eco-Cycle/Broomfield Recycling Center, call (303)404-2839 or email [genevieve@ecocycle.org](mailto:genevieve@ecocycle.org)*