Homemade Snowshoes

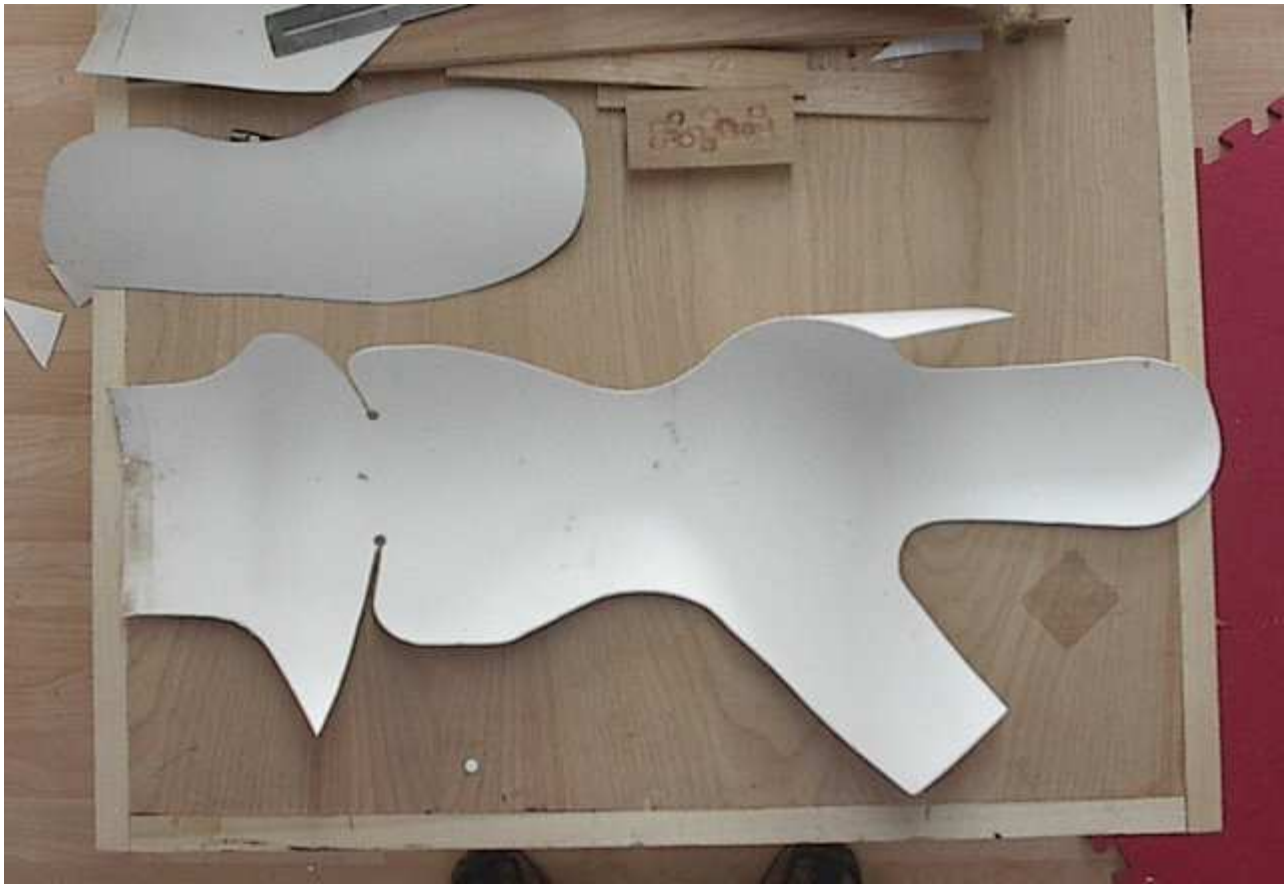
After losing out on a good deal for a commercial set of snowshoes, I decided to make my own. Searching the internet, I found David Fifield's plans for Homemade Snowshoes. Using those plans for inspiration, I bent some 1/2" EMT conduit. Unfortunately, I didn't take any photos of that process.

I found some material that I plan to skin my Skin-On-Frame Recovery Kayak with. It's Roofing Fabric! I think it's a vinyl plastic with nylon threads running through it. I decided that it would work great for the webbing portion. It seems pretty tough, and the really neat part is that you can weld it using a heat gun.

After cutting the vinyl to shape, I grommeted where the lashings would go. Again no photos.

So Bindings are the next step. There are many ways to connect bindings to the shoes. I looked at a bunch of commercial snowshoes and decided on this method. Slightly ahead of the balance point of the shoe frame, I wrapped an 1 3/4" strip around the frame and welded it together. Then I welded another over that, make a strap that goes from one side to the other 4 layers thick. Two 1/8" steel pop-rivets on the top of each side hold the strap in place.

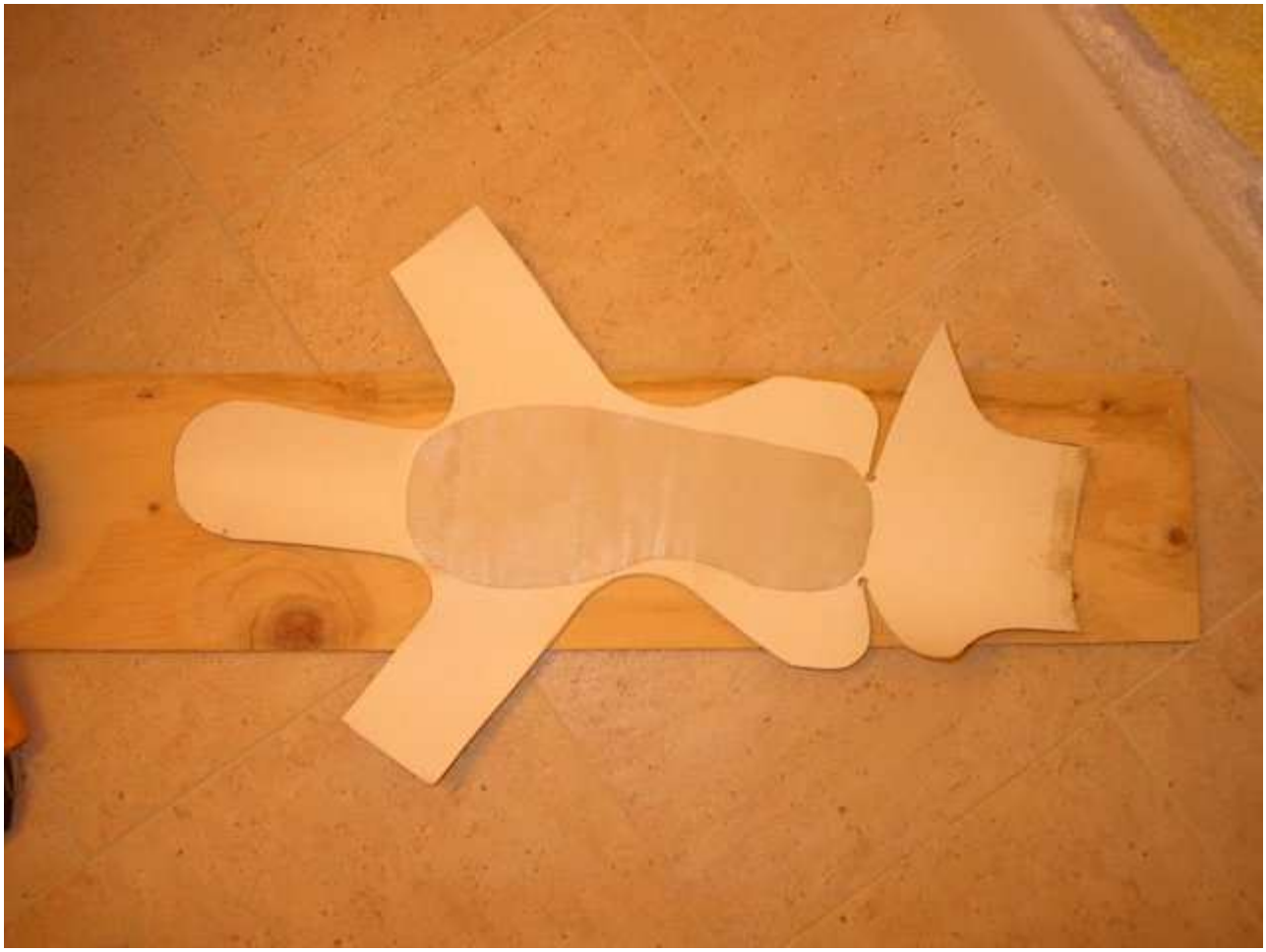
Next is the binding. Again after looking at many other variations, I decide to try to make one that would contain the heel of the boot, hoping that would make the snowshoe follow the boot better.
this is the pattern I came up with, and a doubler.



The doubler is meant to provide a bit of lateral rigidity to the binding, and to increase the thickness of material where it will attach to the cross strap.

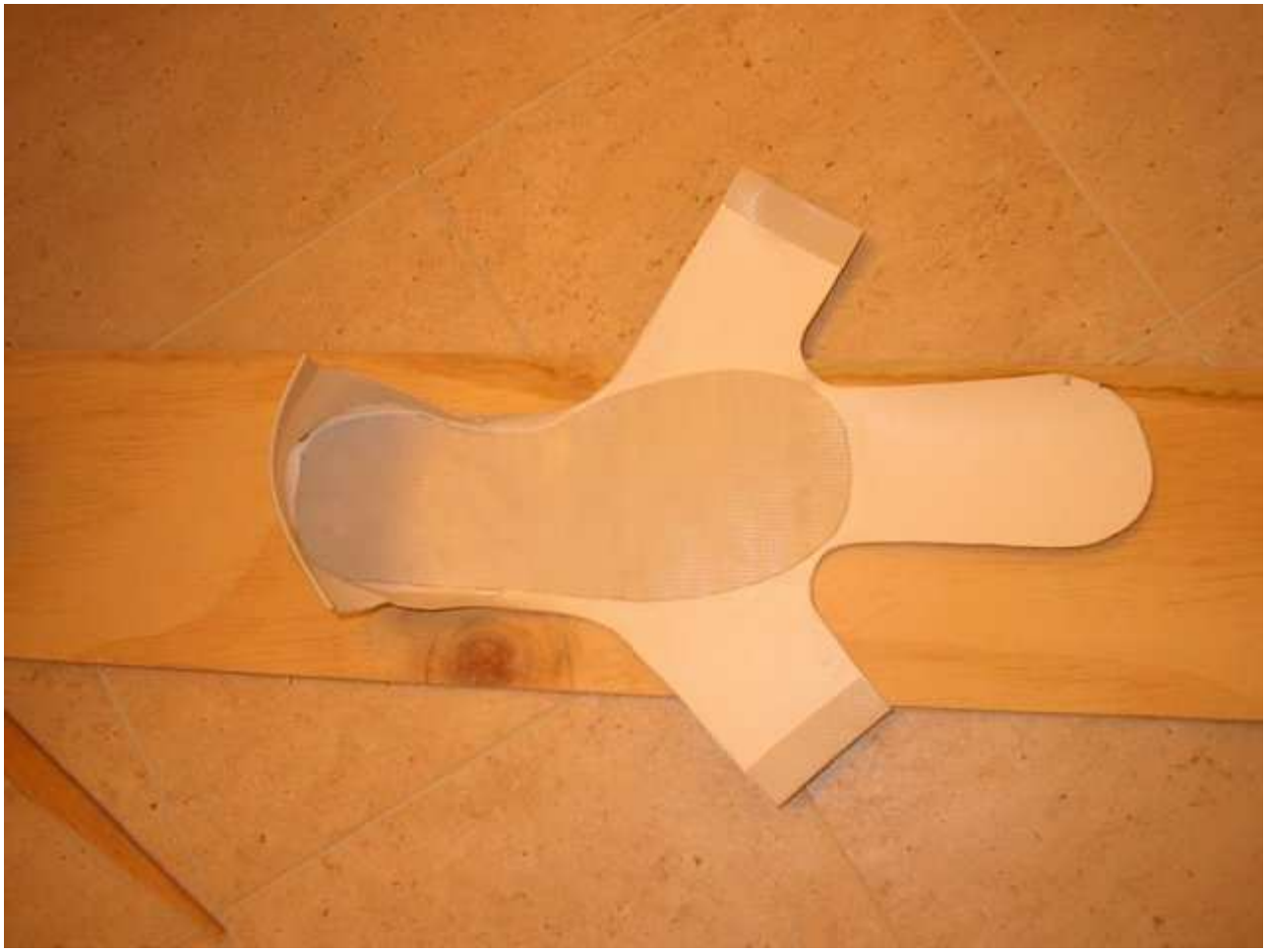
Assembly begins! Using a heat gun, I heated up both the parts to weld together until the vinyl gets tacky. The best way to tell if the plastic is warm enough is to roll them together, if they stick, they are warm enough. NOTICE the gloves. This is HOT business, and there is a pretty good potential for burns! Use Caution!

The doubler welded to the binding.



Heel reinforcement. 1" is folded over and welded. This will provide a strong attachment point if a heel strap is needed.

A little less than an inch is folded over on the "wings" for lack of a better term. This provides reinforcement for the laces. The heel section is also welded up in this photo



A punch makes the holes in the tongue and wings for lacing.

The bindings laced up.

The bindings pop-riveted to the strap and the "traction piece" (again for the lack of a better term).

I used a section of aluminum "C" channel for the traction piece. The teeth are cut into the "C" channel.

FINISHED!!
and the really neat part is THEY WORK!!

I cut a hole in the webbing. That hole allows the toe of the boot to pass through the webbing, making for a more natural gait. It also allows the back of the snowshoe to drop when taking a step. You can just barely see those "D" shaped holes in this picture

There are problems though. First off, I don't know if you noticed, but the color is wrong if you are trying to locate the snowshoes in the snow!!! The other thing is that I don't have any idea how durable this material will be in the cold. Only way to find out is to go snowshoeing when it gets cold

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