

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE**

TETHRD, LLC,	)	
	)	
PLAINTIFF/COUNTERDEFENDANT,	)	Civil Action No. 1:24-cv-00076
	)	Chief Judge Campbell
v.	)	Magistrate Judge Holmes
	)	
CRÜZR SADDLES LLC,	)	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
	)	
DEFENDANT/COUNTERCLAIMANT.	)	
_____	)	

**PLAINTIFF/COUNTERDEFENDANT TETHRD, LLC’S
INITIAL VALIDITY AND ENFORCEABILITY CONTENTIONS**

Pursuant to the Initial Case Management Order (“ICMO”) (Dkt. No. 46), the First Modified Case Management Order (Dkt. No. 49), the Second Modified Case Management Order (Dkt. No. 52), and the Third Modified Case Management Order (Dkt. No. 56), Plaintiff/Counterdefendant Tethrd, LLC (“Plaintiff” or “Tethrd”) hereby objects and responds to Defendant/Counterclaimant Cruzr Saddles LLC’s (“Defendant” or “Cruzr”) Initial Invalidity and Unenforceability Contentions served on July 2, 2025 with these Initial Validity and Enforceability Contentions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tethrd states that the responses contained in these Initial Validity and Enforceability Contentions are necessarily preliminary, given that fact discovery is ongoing, expert discovery has yet to begin, and the Court has not construed any claims of U.S. Patent No. 11,964,175 (the “175 Patent”)¹. Accordingly, Tethrd reserves the right to amend these contentions based on further investigation and on discovery materials, including but not limited to additional documents that

¹ Tethrd’s Initial Validity and Enforceability Contentions rely on plain-meaning constructions of all claim terms that have not yet been adopted by the Court. Alternate constructions may necessitate amending the Initial Validity and Enforceability Contentions, and Tethrd reserves all rights to do so should the need arise.

have not yet been produced, and reserves the right to rely on expert testimony to support its responses to Cruzr's Invalidity and Unenforceability Contentions.

Additionally, subject to any obligations under the rules or orders of this Court, Tethrd reserves the right to supplement or amend these contentions in response to any supplemental or amended contentions from Cruzr. Tethrd also reserves the right to supplement or amend these contentions at any time and for any reason in accordance with the rules and orders of this Court as appropriate, including as discovery proceeds.

II. VALIDITY CONTENTIONS

A. The 175 Patent is Presumed Valid under 35 U.S.C. § 282

The 175 Patent is presumed valid under 35 U.S.C. § 282. As a result, Defendant bears the burden of providing invalidity by clear and convincing evidence. That high burden is even more difficult to meet with references already considered by the United States Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO"). *See, e.g., Sciele Pharma Inc. v. Lupin Ltd.*, 684 F.3d 1253, 1260 (Fed. Cir. 2012) ("[I]t may be harder to meet the clear and convincing burden when the invalidity contention is based upon the same argument on the same reference that the PTO already considered."). Here, Cruzr has cited U.S. Patent No. 4,099,750 ("McGrew"), U.S. Patent No. 4,962,929 ("Melton Jr."), and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2008/0000719A1 ("Jones") as prior art references. These references were previously considered by the USPTO during prosecution of the 175 Patent's parent application, U.S. Patent Application No. 17/231,717 (the "717 Application").

In addition, Cruzr has failed to follow the express requirements of the Invalidity and Unenforceability Contentions as outlined by the ICMO (Dkt. No. 46). First, Cruzr fails to identify "[e]ach prior art patent... by its number, country of origin, and date of issue." ICMO at Section G(c)(i). In addition, Cruzr fails to include the requisite information for any prior art under 35

U.S.C. §§ 102(b), 102(f), or 102(g). *Id.* Third, Cruzr fails to state whether “each item of prior art anticipates each asserted claim or renders it obvious under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 or 103.” ICMO at Section G(c)(ii). Fourth, Cruzr fails to explain “why the prior art renders the asserted claim obvious, including an identification of any combinations of prior art showing obviousness.” *Id.* Fifth, Cruzr fails to provide a “chart identifying specifically where each limitation of each asserted claim is found.” ICMO at Section G(c)(iii).

Despite Cruzr’s multiple failures to abide by the ICMO, Tethrd has prepared a chart, responsive to Defendant’s single prior art chart, that identifies each limitation of each asserted claim that is missing from the asserted prior art. The chart is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**. As shown in the chart, none of Defendant’s prior art references anticipate or render obvious any of the asserted claims of the 175 Patent. Tethrd’s preliminary validity contentions are based on the vague and conclusory interpretation of the cited and/or quoted prior art as set forth in Defendant’s preliminary contentions.

B. The 175 Patent is Valid under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Cruzr’s contentions fail to identify who and what qualifications a person of ordinary skill in the art (“POSITA”) would have. Cruzr fails to show why a person of ordinary skill would be motivated to combine the various references or how they would combine the art to render the claims of the 175 Patent obvious. In fact, Cruzr does not identify a single § 102 reference that predates the January 7, 2020 priority date.

With regard to its § 103 references, Cruzr fails to identify any combination of prior art it believes renders the asserted claims invalid as obvious. Further, Cruzr does not indicate any appropriate motivation to combine any of the identified prior art. The mere existence of prior art elements is not sufficient to render a claimed invention obvious; rather, there must be a clear reason

or rationale for a POSITA to combine those elements in the claimed manner. In fact, as discussed in more detail in Section A below, the identified prior art teaches *away* from designing a bridge as disclosed in the 175 Patent.

In addition to the specific responses provided in the attached **Exhibit A**, Tethrd further responds that the Defendant has failed to establish that the cited purported prior art references provide an enabling disclosure. Tethrd reserves the right to challenge the purported prior art references for lack of enabling disclosure.

In short, Cruzr has failed to meet its burden to show that any of the asserted claims are invalid as anticipated or obvious in light of any identified prior art.

a. Non-Obviousness

The Supreme Court's decision in *Graham v. John Deere Co. of Kansas City* established four fundamental factors to consider when determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103: (1) scope and content of prior art, (2) differences between prior art and the claims at issue, (3) level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art, and (4) secondary considerations of nonobviousness. 383 U.S. 1, 18, 86 S. Ct. 684, 694, 15 L. Ed. 2d 545 (1966).

Regarding the first and second factors, as set forth above and in Tethrd's responsive prior art chart (**Exhibit A**), none of Defendant's prior art references anticipate any of the asserted claims of the 175 Patent. Also as discussed below, the prior art taught away from the actual design and functionality of the inventions disclosed in the 175 Patent.

Third, Defendant has not offered a statement of what it considers to be a person of ordinary skill in the art (*e.g.*, level of education and experience), nor has it presented any rationale for why such a POSITA would be motivated to combine particular references. Defendant baldly claims that Tethrd's invention would have been obvious to a POSITA, but fails to describe why a POSITA

would combine the cited prior art to solve the identified needs. *Cardiac Pacemakers, Inc. v. St. Jude Med., Inc.*, 381 F.3d 1371, 1377 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (“Recognition of an unsolved problem does not render the solution obvious.”)

Fourth, indicia of nonobviousness supports Tethrd’s contention that the asserted claims of the 175 Patent would not have been obvious to a POSITA at the time of invention. Secondary factors, such as real-world evidence suggesting the claimed invention might be nonobvious must be addressed, and may be sufficient to overcome a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *Ruiz v. A.B. Chance Co.*, 234 F.3d 654, 667 (Fed. Cir. 2000); *In re Beattie*, 974 F.2d 1309, 1313 (Fed. Cir. 1992). “A nexus between the merits of the claimed invention and evidence of secondary considerations is required in order for the evidence to be given substantial weight in an obviousness decision.” *Simmons Fastener Corp. v. Illinois Tool Works, Inc.*, 739 F.2d 1573, 1575 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

The Federal Circuit has also emphasized that the significance of this fourth *Graham* factor cannot be overlooked or be relegated to “secondary status.” *In re Cyclobenzaprine Hydrochloride Extended-Release Capsule Pat. Litig.*, 676 F.3d 1063, 1078 (Fed. Cir. 2012). Indicia of nonobviousness also guard as a check against hindsight bias:

[K]nowing that the inventor succeeded in making the patented invention, a fact finder might develop a hunch that the claimed invention was obvious, and then construct a selective version of the facts that confirms that hunch. This is precisely why the Supreme Court explained that objective considerations might prevent a fact finder from falling into such a trap, observing that objective considerations might serve to ‘resist the temptation to read into the prior art the teachings of the invention in issue.’ And, it is precisely why fact finders must ***withhold judgment on an obviousness challenge until it considers all relevant evidence, including that relating to the objective considerations.***

Id. at 1079 (internal citations omitted) (emphasis added).

Examples of indicia of nonobviousness include but are not limited to: (i) commercial success, (ii) long felt but unresolved needs, (iii) prior failures of others to solve such problems, (iv) skepticism by experts, and (v) copying by others. *KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398, 399, 127 S. Ct. 1727, 1730, 167 L. Ed. 2d 705 (2007) (citing *Graham v. John Deere Co. of Kansas City*, 383 U.S. 1, 18, 86 S. Ct. 684, 694, 15 L. Ed. 2d 545 (1966)); *Cardiac Pacemakers, Inc.*, 381 F.3d at 1376; *Advanced Display Sys., Inc. v. Kent State Univ.*, 212 F.3d 1272, 1285 (Fed. Cir. 2000).

Below is a preliminary disclosure of objective evidence in support of nonobviousness. This disclosure is not exhaustive and is provided pursuant to the current stage of the proceedings. Tethrd expressly reserves all rights to supplement, amend, or revise these disclosures as discovery progresses and additional evidence becomes available.

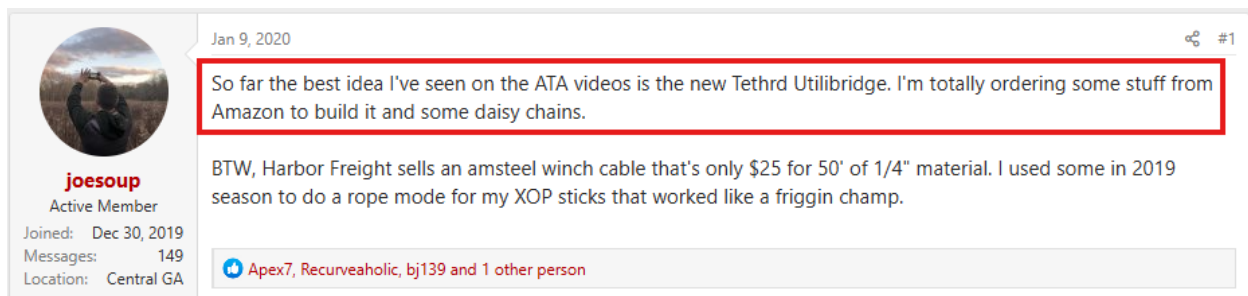
i. *Commercial success*

Exemplary documents supporting “commercial success” include:

- joesoup, et al., *Utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 9, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/utilibridge.23683/>. (Tethrd_000755-788).
- Alison Jasper and Patrick Durkin, *ATA Announces 2020 Trade Show Award Winners*, ARCHERY TRADE ASSOCIATION (Jan. 10, 2020), <https://archerytrade.org/ata-announces-2020-trade-show-award-winners/>. (Tethrd_000435-443).
- Dave Maas, *Tethrd: The Busiest Booth at ATA 2020*, ARCHERY BUSINESS (Jan. 15, 2020), <https://www.archerybusiness.com/tethrd-the-busiest-booth-at-ata-2020>. (Tethrd_000471-483).
- Saddle Hunting, *Tethrd Phantom Review: Sleek, Lightweight, & Comfortable*, YOUTUBE (Sep. 17, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ze39G7J9Ug8>.
- Mike Carney, *Tree Saddle Hunting Gear Round-Up – Best of the Best*, BOWHUNTER (Nov. 23, 2020), <https://www.bowhunter.com/editorial/premium-gear-for-saddle-hunting/385535>. (Tethrd_000484-519).
- Andy May, *A Guide to the Best Tree Saddles and Mobile Tree Stands (And When to Use Them)*, OUTDOORLIFE (Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.outdoorlife.com/gear/guide-to-mobile-hunting-gear/>. (Tethrd_000444-470).

Immediately following Tethrd's release of the Phantom Saddle in January 2020 at the annual Archery Trade Association ("ATA") Show, Tethrd received national recognition and commercial success for its innovative bridge rope assembly, as described in the 175 Patent. *See generally* Tethrd_000435-519; Tethrd_000755-788. During the 2020 ATA Show, saddle hunters lined up crowding around Tethrd's booth to view and test the new Phantom Saddle, which was awarded the Bronze "New Product Launch" Award. Tethrd_000439. A senior editor for *Archery Business* and *Bowhunting World* who attended the show described Tethrd's booth as the "busiest booth at ATA 2020." Tethrd_000471-483.

Saddle hunters also praised Tethrd's innovative bridge rope assembly on saddlehunter.com, a website and online community dedicated to tree saddle hunting:



Tethrd_000755.

Following the 2020 ATA Show, Tethrd's commercial success continued to grow. A November 2020 *Bowhunter* article described Tethrd's Phantom Saddle as "a full-featured, premium saddle that introduces many *new saddle technologies*.... Perhaps the most significant advance is the *new Amsteel Utilibridge*, which provides 30 inches of smooth-sliding, on-the-fly adjustability, so you can get the exact bridge length you prefer." Tethrd_000490 (emphasis added). In October 2021—almost two years after the Phantom Saddle initially debuted—an *Outdoor Life* article ranked the Phantom Saddle as the "Best Tree Saddle":

The phantom saddle is simply best in class, in my opinion, when it comes to single panel saddles. From the fit and feel, to the features included in the design the Phantom is just a winner. The Phantom had a team of experienced tree saddle users put their heads together and build the saddle of their dreams and the Phantom is the design they came up with. While I certainly have sat in some other superb saddles, the Phantom is my favorite to date.

Tethrd_000451. Other reviewers praised it for being “a lightweight and streamlined saddle that doesn’t sacrifice comfort.” Saddle Hunting, *Tethrd Phantom Review: Sleek, Lightweight, & Comfortable*, YOUTUBE (Sep. 17, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ze39G7J9Ug8>.

Since the Phantom Saddle launched in January 2020, every new Tethrd saddle has incorporated an adjustable Amsteel Utilibridge. The bridge rope assembly as described in the 175 Patent has consistently been marketed as a primary selling point and differentiator of Tethrd’s saddles over those of competitors (except for the ones that immediately copied Tethrd’s design), driving consumer demand and directly contributing to Tethrd’s commercial success.

ii. *Long felt but unresolved needs*

Exemplary documents supporting “long felt but unresolved needs” include:

- Stevey220, et al., *Lets talk bridge – Rope vs Amsteel vs Webbing*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Oct. 30, 2019), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/lets-talk-bridge-rope-vs-amsteel-vs-webbing.20873/>. (Tethrd_000685-700).
- Joe07296333, et al., *Bridge type differences*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Oct. 30, 2019), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/bridge-type-differences.20868/>. (Tethrd_000553-558).
- joesoup, et al., *Utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 9, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/utilibridge.23683/>. (Tethrd_000755-788).
- stone1, et al., *Upgrade your Tethrd Mantis into a Tethrd Phantom (Amsteel prussik bridge)*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 17, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/upgrade-your-tethrd-mantis-into-a-tethrd-phantom-amsteel-prussik-bridge.23972/>. (Tethrd_000712-754).
- Saddle Hunting, *Tethrd Phantom Review: Sleek, Lightweight, & Comfortable*, YOUTUBE (Sep. 17, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ze39G7J9Ug8>.

As Cruzr argues in its Initial Invalidity and Unenforceability Contentions, “it was well known that a fixed length bridge (such as the bridge on the Mantis) presented problems for the individual wearer, such as being too long or too short... causing discomfort when the wearer is sitting and/or leaning, and creating a cumbersome excessive dangle...” Before Tethrd launched the Phantom Saddle at the 2020 ATA Show, there were no viable solutions to these problems.

Saddle hunters across the country experienced these issues and proposed temporary solutions, but none were successful or sustainable for various reasons, including safety. Without a full bury, Amsteel bridges were slippery and at increased risk of fraying. Further, the few hunters who were willing to try Amsteel bridges could not figure out how to make it adjustable, due to Amsteel’s low melting point and weakened strength when knotted. The below saddlehunter.com posts showcase some first-hand experiences and grievances with such issues.



DaveT1963
Well-Known Member
Vendor Rep
Joined: Dec 2, 2014
Messages: 3,511

Oct 30, 2019

The only problem with webbing is that some can dry rot over time and some can give way suddenly w/o warning if kicked (due to woven nature. Personally, I like amsteel or webbing and I replace mine annually or at any sign of irregular wear.

Last edited: Oct 30, 2019



Dylan9862003
Well-Known Member
Joined: Aug 29, 2018
Messages: 229
Location: Prairieville, La

Oct 30, 2019

I'm currently trying to find what works best for me. My mantis has a fixed amsteel bridge and my flex has an adjustable rope bridge with prissik and tender (Least favorite due to bulk). What I do like is the adjustability and the ability to disconnect and stow for the walk in. So I have the following to test and try out"

1. Fixed amsteel bridge that I already have time with (Mantis)
2. Adjustable rope on the flex that I have not cut off yet
3. 1/4" amsteel daisy chain. Girth hitched on one side with carabiner on the other so I can remove and stow for walking and still add links to the carabiner to adjust while in use if needed.
4. 1/4" Amsteel whoopie sling I made last night so no experience with it yet. Pretty simple to make just took a little patience in dealing with the amsteel.
5. I have some climbing rated 1" tubular webbing I intend to either tie or try to find tri-glides for(Any links would be appreciated)

Being I like the comfort of the flex a lot better than the mantis I will put all of the bridges on the flex for their test runs and see which works best for me. I think I want to be able to stay adjustable mainly for when using the hand climber the shorter bridge seems to make the climbing easier and I can make larger strides while climbing.

I will circle back with my .02 in a week or so



hickstick
Well-Known Member
Joined: Nov 16, 2016
Messages: 296

Nov 1, 2019 #16

first saddle was a sitdrag with an amsteel bridge, got the Kestrel 2 years ago and used the rope bridge that came with it but disliked the weight of the rope and disliked the weight of the 3rd 'biner even more (linemans, bridge, and tether), I just removed it a couple weeks ago and did another fixed 1/4" amsteel...and remembered while I love it so much...amsteel just slides through the tether 'biner better than anything else. and its super light.

Xcentric



NikoTheBowHunter
Well-Known Member
Joined: Dec 20, 2018
Messages: 564
Location: Cottage Grove, WI

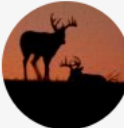
Nov 13, 2019 #24

DaveT1963 said: Ⓜ

I probably go overboard with it, replace all my Amsteel every year.

With how much my amsteel is starting to fray I plan on replacing it at the end of the season. For a few \$\$ why chance your life.

Tethrd_000686-687; Tethrd_000692; Tethrd_000695.



Allegheny Tom
Well-Known Member
SH Member
Joined: Feb 4, 2018
Messages: 6,330
Location: Western Pennsylvania

Oct 30, 2019 #2

Welcome.

For a new guy, I would recommend a bridge that the length can be adjusted. Bridge length is a very personal thing and one of the major influences on comfort. The Mantis bridge, IMO, is way too long and its not adjustable. For just a few dollars, you can buy 5 or 6 feet of 1/4" Amsteel and easily make an adjustable whoopie sling bridge that is crazy strong. Amsteel isn't knot friendly so buries are used. They are easy to make.

Climbing rope makes an okay bridge but it is my least favorite. I don't like the bulky knots.

My favorite bridge is 1" tubular webbing with tri slides on each side. Slides makes the bridge fully adjustable and requires no stitching or knots. It also allows you to clinch the bridge to the saddle loops which gives you yet another adjustment. Changing where the bridge grips the loops also has an influence on comfort.

Lots of guys just tie tubular webbing to the bridge. Its still semi adjustable, but you just have to re-tie each time. Some guys do adjust bridge length fairly often depending on the situation at hand.

I don't adjust mine very much.

I have it about 23 inches with a low tether, which feels good to me and has other advantages, often discussed in other threads.

Bwhana, Joe07296333 and Exhumis



Allegheny Tom
Well-Known Member
SH Member

Joined: Feb 4, 2018
Messages: 6,330
Location: Western Pennsylvania

Oct 30, 2019 #10

jspradley said: Ⓢ

Does anyone have pics they could share of the whoopie sling bridge setup? I am trying to wrap my pea brain around how this works

You dont HAVE to double wrap the Amsteel around the saddle loops, but it is helpful.
In this pic, one side is a locked brummel and the other side is the whoopie. The tag end of the whoopie should have a simple end bury which keeps the end from un-weaving, but more importantly, it acts as a stopper in the unlikely event the whoopie ever slipped. But I never had that whoopie slip even a fraction of an inch. Its an excellent bridge but not quite as smooth during rotation thru the carabiner compared to a webbing bridge. I could "feel" the ends of the buries when I rotated.

Btw, that little orange loop on the end was just to make it easier to un-do the end bury if I ever wanted to. I could just pull that orange loop and then undo the whoopie. Its almost impossible to pull an end bury back thru the Amsteel. If you want to easily undo the whoopie, you need to undo the end bury. That little pull isnt really needed.



Tethrd_000554; Tethrd_000556-557.



Squirrels
Well-Known Member
Joined: Oct 29, 2017
Messages: 2,017

Jan 9, 2020 #17

Jtaylor said: Ⓢ

I might be wrong but wasn't this the same design as the HSS linesman belt from a few years back? Girth hitch the one side onto your linesman loop and clip the prusik via caribeaner to the other. https://shop.gomuddy.com/the-safety...Mlibyc05735gIVT_DACH3V8AGEEAQYASABEgIyjPD_BwE

Sort of. Biggest difference is that this is spliced in thus no need for girth hitch and the prusik is splice/made onto the bridge loop directly vs being attached by a biner. What does that matter you ask?? Well it give you more range when rotating because you aren't being stopped by a girthed hitch loop tied with a figure eight on one side and a prusik and biner on the other side. It's more compact and less metal.

MCDM and Jtaylor



Squirrels
Well-Known Member
Joined: Oct 29, 2017
Messages: 2,017

Jan 10, 2020 #59

Yes the adjustable rope bridge has been DIYd for sometime, and for dang good reason. I never used one because I could not get past the fact that you had decreased range due to a carabiner and/or knots. The Amsteel adjustable bridge doesn't limit the range like other adjustable bridges I've tried. If the range of motion is a big deal to you then by all means rock the rope style!!

g2outdoors



EricS
Well-Known Member
Vendor Rep
SH Member
Joined: Dec 14, 2016
Messages: 5,518
Location: Georgia

Jan 10, 2020 #60

I didn't think I would like an adjustable bridge. I was wrong. I ran a really short bridge when hunting with trad gear, about a 30" bridge rifle hunting and when walking to and from stand I had it over my shoulders like I used to run my linesman's belt. My linesman's would go in my sys pouch with everything else. Worked well.



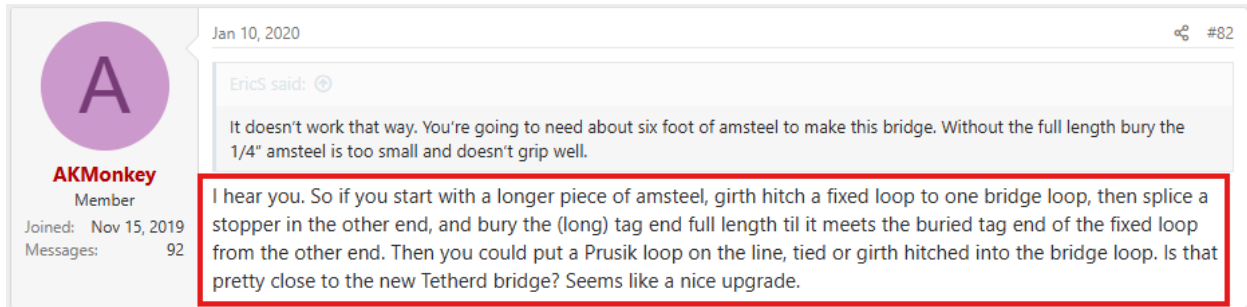
mtsrunner
Well-Known Member
Joined: Sep 10, 2019
Messages: 1,613

Jan 10, 2020 #63

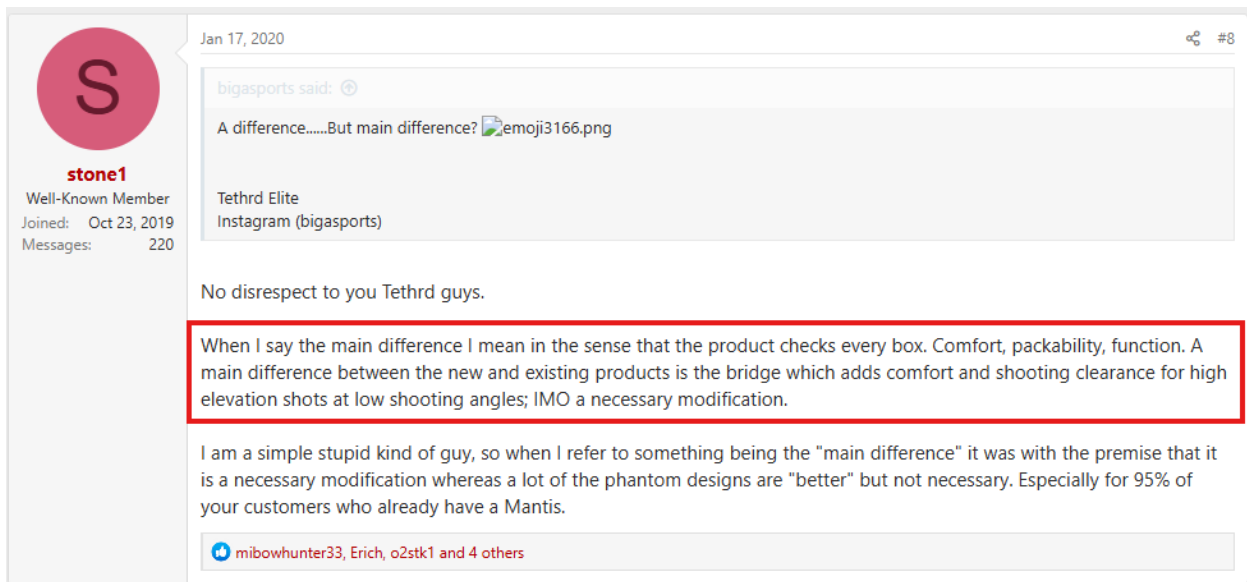
Squirrels said: Ⓢ

Yes the adjustable rope bridge has been DIYd for sometime, and for dang good reason. I never used one because I could not get past the fact that you had decreased range due to a carabiner and/or knots. The Amsteel adjustable bridge doesn't limit the range like other adjustable bridges I've tried. If the range of motion is a big deal to you then by all means rock the rope style!!

Not sure if that was in response to my post (post 44). Anyway, my adjustable rope bridge had no limitations. If you look at the picture. It was a 6mm Sterling TRC prussic connected directly to my right side bridge loop. No carabiners. I could cinch it all the way down like a belt if I wanted or lengthen it all the way out to over four feet. I kind of dialed in to my favorite length, so I just ended up putting a fixed tubular webbing bridge on mine for simplicity and weight savings. I am probably going to mess around with making one with Amsteel like the Phantom because I love saving weight and I am practicing rappelling, SRTing and one sticking in the off season and can see the benefit of adjustability for those techniques.



Tethrd_000760; Tethrd_000777; Tethrd_000779; Tethrd_000786-787.



Tethrd_000715.

The 175 Patent finally solved these unresolved needs for an adjustable, lightweight, and durable bridge rope assembly in January 2020. By introducing its new bridge, Tethrd changed the game of saddle hunting. Saddle Hunting, *Tethrd Phantom Review: Sleek, Lightweight, & Comfortable*, YOUTUBE (Sep. 17, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ze39G7J9Ug8> [4:02 – 5:53]. Saddle hunters were finally able to safely and easily adjust their bridge length up to 40 inches throughout the hunt, including while elevated in a tree.

iii. *Prior failures of others*

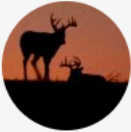
Exemplary documents supporting “prior failures of others” include:

- Joe07296333, et al., *Bridge type differences*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Oct. 30, 2019), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/bridge-type-differences.20868/>. (Tethrd_000553-558).
- Whattohunt, et al., *Tethrd mantis discomfort*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Dec. 24, 2019), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/tethrd-mantis-discomfort.23107/>. (Tethrd_000701-711).
- joesoup, et al., *Utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 9, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/utilibridge.23683/>. (Tethrd_000755-788).
- Nugget, et al., *DIY utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Feb. 18, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/diy-utilibridge.24863/#post-355892>. (Tethrd_000660-684).

A number of saddle manufacturers have tried to develop, marketed, and sold various rope bridge designs that attempt to solve the needs described above. None before Tethrd’s Phantom Saddle, however, were successful in that pursuit. Tethrd, itself, could not solve these problems before January 2020. For example, before the Phantom Saddle, Tethrd designed and sold the Mantis Saddle, which featured a fixed bridge. Although the bridge was made of Amsteel, which offers lightness and strength, it was not adjustable, causing discomfort and soreness.

When other competitors offered an adjustable bridge, it was not made of Amsteel. So, while the wearer could adjust the length of the bridge, the material was often heavy and bulky, and the friction hitch could not slide smoothly along the rope. In other words, no saddle maker successfully achieved the combined attributes of adjustability, comfort, lightweight design, and durability. No one had figured out how to make an Amsteel friction hitch safely grab onto an Amsteel main body until Tethrd developed the Phantom Saddle.

Some exemplary, but ultimately unsuccessful, attempts to solve these issues are included below:



Allegheny Tom
Well-Known Member
SH Member

Joined: Feb 4, 2018
Messages: 6,330
Location: Western Pennsylvania

Oct 30, 2019 #2

Welcome.

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Oct 30, 2019 #10

jspradley said: Ⓜ

Does anyone have pics they could share of the whoopie sling bridge setup? I am trying to wrap my pea brain around how this works

You dont HAVE to double wrap the Amsteel around the saddle loops, but it is helpful.
In this pic, one side is a locked brummel and the other side is the whoopie. The tag end of the whoopie should have a simple end bury which keeps the end from un-weaving, but more importantly, it acts as a stopper in the unlikely event the whoopie ever slipped. But I never had that whoopie slip even a fraction of an inch. Its an excellent bridge but not quite as smooth during rotation thru the carabiner compared to a webbing bridge. I could "feel" the ends of the buries when I rotated.

Btw, that little orange loop on the end was just to make it easier to un-do the end bury if I ever wanted to. I could just pull that orange loop and then undo the whoopie. Its almost impossible to pull an end bury back thru the Amsteel. If you want to easily undo the whoopie, you need to undo the end bury. That little pull loop isnt really needed.



Tethrd_000554; Tethrd_000556-557.



Whattohunt
New Member

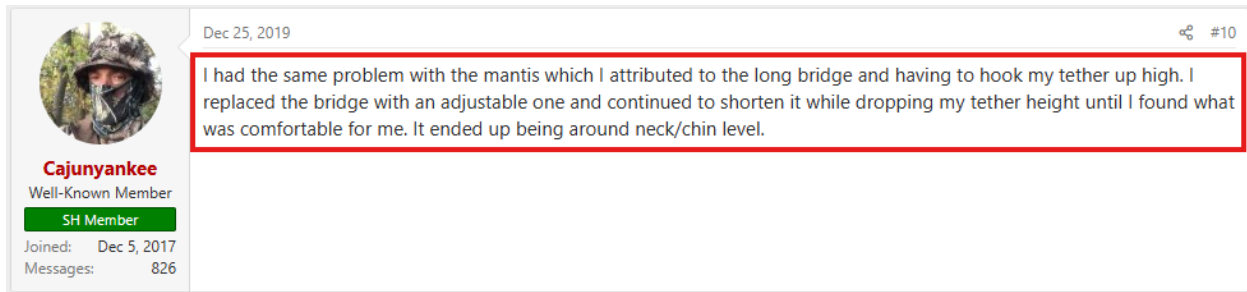
Joined: Nov 11, 2019
Messages: 16

Dec 24, 2019 #1

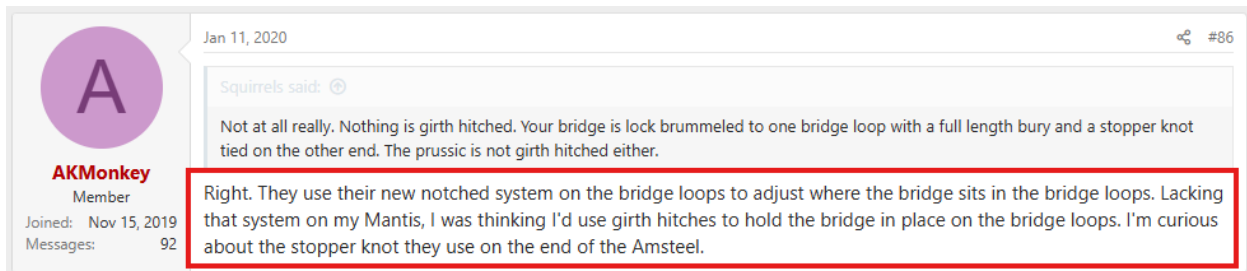
Hey guys I've been hunting out of a tethrd mantis saddle for a year now and still cant seem to find great comfort. It either cuts the circulation to my feet or the leg straps bunch up to my crotch. I'm about 150lbs. Any of you customized your saddle to make it more comfortable?

Sent from my SM-G975U using Tapatalk

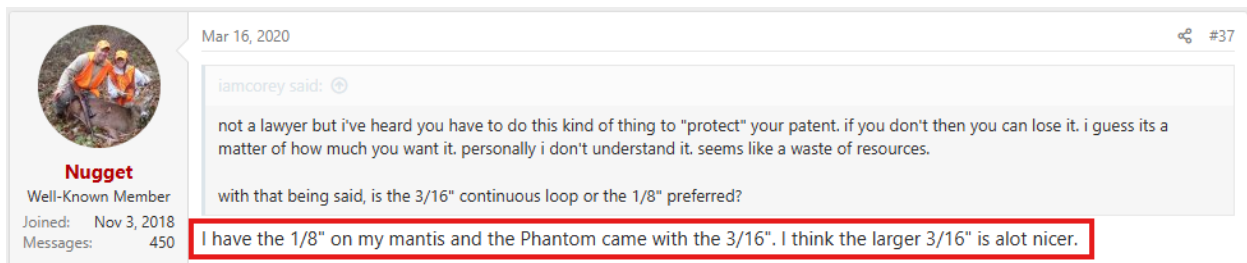
 xcskier_hunter



Tethrd_000701; Tethrd_000704.



Tethrd_000787-788.



Tethrd_000675.

Before the Phantom Saddle launched in January 2020, it was not obvious to implement the functionality that is claimed in the 175 Patent.

iv. *Skepticism by experts*

Exemplary documents supporting “skepticism by experts” include:

- *Rope User's Manual: Guide to Rope Selection, Handling, Inspection and Retirement*, SAMSON ROPE TECHNOLOGIES, INC., <https://www.samsonrope.com/resources/arborist/rope-manual>. (Tethrd_000789-848).
- Allen Edwards, *Knots in Dyneema*, YouTube (Mar. 28, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9GLp1Esins&t=3s>.

- Stevey220, et al., *Lets talk bridge – Rope vs Amsteel vs Webbing*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Oct. 30, 2019), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/lets-talk-bridge-rope-vs-amsteel-vs-webbing.20873/>. (Tethrd_000685-700).
- joesoup, et al., *Utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 9, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/utilibridge.23683/>. (Tethrd_000755-788).
- Hunter260, et al., *DIY Utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 11, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/diy-utilibridge.23753/>. (Tethrd_000564-659).
- Nugget, et al., *Amsteel tether*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (May 16, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/amsteel-tether.26671/>. (Tethrd_000520-542).
- Jeffy, et al., *Anybody using amsteel for linemans belt?*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Nov. 10, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/anybody-using-amsteel-for-linemans-belt.33291/>. (Tethrd_000543-552).

Defendant alleges it would be obvious to use Amsteel to create a bridge rope assembly and to replace a fixed eye with an adjustable friction hitch, citing, among others, Samson splicing instructions as prior art. However, the Samson rope user’s manual, itself, explicitly cautions against using Amsteel rope in such a manner, highlighting safety concerns and performance limitations. For example, the user manual states that, relative to other fiber types, Amsteel has a low melting point of 300°F. Tethrd_000821. Accordingly, Samson emphasizes avoiding applications that generate heat through friction, which may “reduce a rope’s strength and fatigue resistance.” *Id.* Such heat-generating applications include friction hitches.

Samson warns that tying knots in Amsteel is unadvisable because most knots weaken the rope strength and may slip, which increases a saddle hunter’s risk of falling. Samson recommends splicing as the preferred method for terminations, as opposed to knots because “[k]nots can significantly decrease a rope’s strength” by up to 50%. Tethrd_000822-823. Knot slippage is largely caused by the fact that Amsteel itself is slippery in nature and has a low melting point. Allen Edwards, *Knots in Dyneema*, YOUTUBE (Mar. 28, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9GLp1Esins&t=3s> [0:18-0:41]. When the knot starts to slip,

the knot experiences a large amount of force, which may generate enough heat to catch fire and melt the Amsteel line itself. *Id.* at [0:41-1:33].

Seasoned saddle hunting experts also directly expressed their skepticism of using an Amsteel bridge rope assembly on saddlehunter.com:



pesqimon
Well-Known Member
Joined: Apr 25, 2018
Messages: 2,325
Location: Massachusetts

Oct 30, 2019 #6

Allegheny Tom said: 

I copied this from my answer in the thread "Bridge type differences" under the sub forum Saddle Info for new users.

For a new guy, I would recommend a bridge that the length can be adjusted. Bridge length is a very personal thing and one of the major influences on comfort. The Mantis bridge, IMO, is way too long and its not adjustable.

For just a few dollars, you can buy 5 or 6 feet of 1/4" Amsteel and easily make an adjustable whoopie sling bridge that is crazy strong. Amsteel isn't knot friendly so buries are used. They are easy to make.

Climbing rope makes an okay bridge but it is my least favorite. I don't like the bulky knots.
[Click to expand...](#)

Agreed!

I would add that amsteel is not good for a shock load so if your climbing method involves slack (1 sticking) you might bot want an amsteel bridge.

I am also unsure of the shock load capability of the triglides, so I plan to switch to water knots on both sides of bridge once I settle on length.

Doublesteps.com has tri glides

 Tapeworm, bj139 and Dylan9862003

Tethrd_000687-688.



Squirrels
Well-Known Member
Joined: Oct 29, 2017
Messages: 2,017

Jan 9, 2020 #23

DaveT1963 said: 

I was a skeptic and even told Greg I had no clue AMSTEEL would work like that and that I had my doubts. I was wrong. I can say 100% after having tested it every sit this year - it does NOT move - at all. Anyone can make or tweak a saddle, not everyone can be innovative while doing so.

It works great. I was skeptic at first to. I thought it would possibly slip since Amsteel is so slick but I was just wrong. It holds great.

 bj139, d_rek and JBDaddy

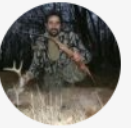


Bwhana
Well-Known Member
SH Member
Joined: Dec 8, 2017
Messages: 2,318
Location: Hickory, NC

Jan 10, 2020 #72

Was Sampson consulted or involved in/about this design? Curious what they have to say about the use with a friction knot in this specific application.

Tethrd_000763; Tethrd_000782.



ricky racer
Well-Known Member
Joined: Aug 8, 2016
Messages: 2,599
Location: Niles/Buchanan, MI

Jan 11, 2020 #22

Amsteel seems pretty slippery to use a friction hitch on, to me. I'm surprised it's working....



mtsrunner
Well-Known Member
Joined: Sep 10, 2019
Messages: 1,613

Jan 12, 2020 #54

Squirrels said: ☺

I'm sure you both already know this but just psa for anyone that doesn't sterling states that the Hollowblock should not be used as main life supporting piece. In the case of using it as a prusik on an amsteel bridge it would qualify as a main life supporting piece.

Yes, I knew that. If I decide to actually go with an adjustable Amsteel bridge with the hollow block or an Amsteel prussic, I would create an eye splice with the tag end rather than a stopper knot. I would use a carabiner or soft shackle to connect that tag end eye back to my right side bridge loop as a back up tie-in point. This would keep me from hitting the deck if the prussic failed. The way I see Tethrd's utilibridge, there is no backup if the Amsteel prussic fails. Samson doesn't recommend knots in Amsteel

Sent from my iPad using Tapatalk

Ontariofarmer

Tethrd_000571-572; Tethrd_000586.



ThereWillBeSpuds
Well-Known Member
Joined: Nov 12, 2019
Messages: 648

May 16, 2020 #2

Nugget said: ☺

Has anyone made an amsteel tether? Thinking that a 20' length of 1/4" amsteel with a 6" locked brummel loop an a full bury may make a nice lightweight tether. Thoughts?

Amsteel is extremely static and also doesnt play well with most (all?) Friction hitches or mechanical adjustment devices. Not the best choice for a tether imho.

Sent from my SM-G900V using Tapatalk

chi0082



ThereWillBeSpuds
Well-Known Member
Joined: Nov 12, 2019
Messages: 648

May 17, 2020 #6

Allegheny Tom said: ☺

This has been asked many times on this forum. I think I asked it myself a couple years ago. I was always told that the general consensus has been that Amsteel is not recommended for tethers. But if that were still the case, then why is the utilibridge okay to use? It uses a prusik. I'd like to hear the latest thoughts from some rope gurus about prusiks on Amsteel. Is the full bury effective and is it safe?

Im by no means an expert, but the utilibridge skeezes me out. Samson wouldnt endorse this, Id bet.

Sent from my SM-G900V using Tapatalk

👍 elk yinzer



Wirrex
Moderator
Staff member
SH Member
Joined: Oct 8, 2016
Messages: 2,319
Location: Wisconsin

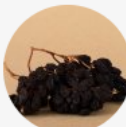
Jun 16, 2020 #28

I personally do not and would not trust my life to amsteel. It wasn't long ago on this forum that the idea was shunned. I'm not sure what changed.

I will admit to doing things that aren't recommended once in a while but I'm not chancing something that holds me from taking a long ride in a pine box. I'll stick to proven climbing rated rope.

👍 bj139, Aaronpaul14 and chi0082

Tethrd_000520-522; Tethrd_000533.



raisins
Well-Known Member
SH Member
Joined: Jan 17, 2019
Messages: 6,950

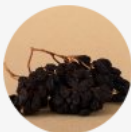
Nov 10, 2020 #5

Jeffy said: ☺

So the title kinda says it all right. Do any of you guys use amsteel as your linemans belt? Im thinking of going this route to reduce bulk/weight a little bit since im also thinking about running dual linemans belts for the proper safety factor when getting up past branches and what not.

Amsteel is not recommended by the maker of amsteel or climbers/arborists for use in friction hitches (either ropes) because it has a very low melting point (around boiling point of water) and can melt inside the hitch and all of a sudden become super slick. It is a bit of a scandal that it is used so often by saddle manufacturers in non-recommended ways.

Oplux with TRC hitch is your friend here.



raisins
Well-Known Member
SH Member
Joined: Jan 17, 2019
Messages: 6,950

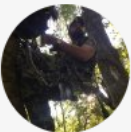
Nov 10, 2020 #7

Jeffy said: 

In your opinion what about amsteel would make it unsafe for a linmans belt? Considering there are saddles out there that use the same for a bridge that would actually be taking the same or less pressure for a longer duration of time. Now i am certainly not talking about my tree tether and i would never recommend that, due to shock loading factors and all that. I am currently using 11mm climbing rope for both (after having done a good bit of research) but would definitely like to size down the pile if i add a second.

You will find that the community here is evenly split on the use of amsteel in bridges. I am in the camp of "it doesn't make sense to risk your life by using a product in a way that the maker (Samson) and also people that I trust as much or more (climbers and arborists) than relatively new saddle makers would never do".

You'll really like Oplux and TRC together. The core is amsteel I believe, but the sheaths are Technora, which is similar to amsteel but has a melting point that is ridiculously high (you can't melt it using a gas stove).



kyler1945
Well-Known Member
SH Member
Joined: Dec 4, 2016
Messages: 7,010
Location: Willis, TX

Nov 10, 2020 #11

I'm on team safety police and think you shouldn't do it specifically because of that.

but If you think about all facets of use, from a cost, time, risk, and technical aspect, you find out that it's not the thing you really think it is.

I used a predator lineman's belt for four years, even though I had oplux for other uses. I was stubborn, and finally swapped my lineman's. I lost 5 ounces on kit without making any compromises. Lots of more compact options, that don't introduce additional risk, or complexity.

don't overthink this one.

coming from a guy who both tried what you're thinking for a time in the yard and realized it has no benefits, and from my position on the code red safety hollerin' squad!

 Bigterp

Tethrd_000544-546.

The use of friction hitches on Amsteel is strongly discouraged; the risk of melting and slippage were discussed. From manufacturers to every-day users, experts in the saddle hunting industry have all expressed skepticism regarding the feasibility of claimed bridge rope assembly. Because it was not obvious to create a bridge using full-buried Amsteel, no one knew how to address these safety issues, until Tethrd developed the Phantom Saddle's Amsteel Utilibridge.

v. Copying by others

Exemplary documents supporting “copying by others” include:

- joesoup, et al., *Utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 9, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/utilibridge.23683/>. (Tethrd_000755-788).
- Hunter260, et al., *DIY Utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 11, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/diy-utilibridge.23753/>. (Tethrd_000564-659).
- stone1, et al., *Upgrade your Tethrd Mantis into a Tethrd Phantom (Amsteel prussik bridge)*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Jan. 17, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/upgrade-your-tethrd-mantis-into-a-tethrd-phantom-amsteel-prussik-bridge.23972/>. (Tethrd_000712-754).
- Pushing Up Daisies, *DIY Utilibridge*, YOUTUBE (Jan. 19, 2020), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJQKl_KMIlk.
- cspot, et al., *CruZR Saddles*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Feb. 16, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/cruZR-saddles.24815/>. (Tethrd_000561-563).
- Nugget, et al., *DIY utilibridge*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Feb. 18, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/diy-utilibridge.24863/#post-355892>. (Tethrd_000660-684).
- Hughes03, et al., *CRUZR Saddle??*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (Feb. 21, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/cruZR-saddle.24931/>. (Tethrd_000559-560).
- Nugget, et al., *Amsteel tether*, SADDLEHUNTER.COM (May 16, 2020), <https://saddlehunter.com/community/index.php?threads/amsteel-tether.26671/>. (Tethrd_000520-542).
- Compl., *Tethrd LLC v. Latitude Outdoors LLC*, No. 1:24-cv-00832-JMB-RSK, (W. D. Mich. 8/12/24). (Tethrd_000849-898).

Tethrd’s debut of the Phantom Saddle at the 2020 ATA Show prompted an immediate wave of competitors aiming to replicate the groundbreaking Amsteel Utilibridge design. In fact, *less than 24 hours* after the first day of ATA where Tethrd showcased its new bridge rope assembly on the Phantom Saddle, dozens of saddle hunters converged on saddlehunter.com to figure out how to recreate it:



joesoup
Active Member
Joined: Dec 30, 2019
Messages: 149
Location: Central GA

Jan 9, 2020 #1

So far the best idea I've seen on the ATA videos is the new Tethrd Utilibridge. I'm totally ordering some stuff from Amazon to build it and some daisy chains.

BTW, Harbor Freight sells an amsteel winch cable that's only \$25 for 50' of 1/4" material. I used some in 2019 season to do a rope mode for my XOP sticks that worked like a friggin champ.

Apex7, Recurveaholic, bj139 and 1 other person



joesoup
Active Member
Joined: Dec 30, 2019
Messages: 149
Location: Central GA

Jan 9, 2020 #5

JBDaddy said: 

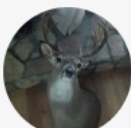
Looks interesting as a way to get rid of a carabiner and ropeman.

Is it just a spliced loop in the middle of a 60-ish inch run of amsteel where the tag end is fed all the way back through the whole length? Seems like if you wanted to change it to be left handed that'd be quite a thing to undo.



Watch on  YouTube

It looks like an amsteel prussic loop on one side, and a "whoopie" on the other with a loop on the bridge loop. If I DIY it, that will be girth hitched or with a carabiner.



JBDaddy
Well-Known Member
Joined: Jan 21, 2018
Messages: 766
Location: Lenawee, MI

Jan 9, 2020 #7

joesoup said: 

It looks like an amsteel prussic loop on one side, and a "whoopie" on the other with a loop on the bridge loop. If I DIY it, that will be girth hitched or with a carabiner.

An earlier post (I think it was from flinginairos) said "not a whoopie" while we were guessing at it before good pictures surfaced. I don't think they could patent a whoopie sling anyway.

I can't see any taper in it, and I'd be worried about how well the 3/16" prussic loop would bite if it were hollow, so my guess is that it's fed all the way back through itself - but I haven't seen one up close, and I'm good at being wrong.

I saw a video clip where it didn't look girth hitched on the fixed side, but I guess it could be. Probably how I'd do it too. Good call.

RRussell



mtsrunner
Well-Known Member
Joined: Sep 10, 2019
Messages: 1,613

Jan 10, 2020 #63

Squirrels said: Ⓢ

Yes the adjustable rope bridge has been DIYd for sometime, and for dang good reason. I never used one because I could not get past the fact that you had decreased range due to a carabiner and/or knots. The Amsteel adjustable bridge doesn't limit the range like other adjustable bridges I've tried. If the range of motion is a big deal to you then by all means rock the rope style!!

Not sure if that was in response to my post (post 44). Anyway, my adjustable rope bridge had no limitations. If you look at the picture. It was a 6mm Sterling TRC prussic connected directly to my right side bridge loop. No carabiners. I could cinch it all the way down like a belt if I wanted or lengthen it all the way out to over four feet. I kind of dialed in to my favorite length, so i just ended up putting a fixed tubular webbing bridge on mine for simplicity and weight savings. I am probably going to mess around with making one with Amsteel like the Phantom because I love saving weight and I am practicing rappelling, SRTing and one sticking in the off season and can see the benefit of adjustability for those techniques.



mtsrunner
Well-Known Member
Joined: Sep 10, 2019
Messages: 1,613

Jan 10, 2020 #66

Squirrels said: Ⓢ

It wasn't aimed particularly at your post. Just in general. If you have you prusik tied into the bridge loop as short as possible you won't have much limitations. The limitations start to occur when there is a carabiner on that prusik that hooks to the bridge loop.

I agree. Like I said, I'll probably make the Amsteel version this weekend. Probably use 3/16" for the bridge and 1/8" for the continuous loop/prussic.

Edit for brain fart on Amsteel size

Sent from my iPad using Tapatalk

Last edited: Jan 10, 2020



AKMonkey
Member
Joined: Nov 15, 2019
Messages: 92

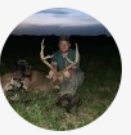
Jan 10, 2020 #82

EricS said: Ⓢ

It doesn't work that way. You're going to need about six foot of amsteel to make this bridge. Without the full length bury the 1/4" amsteel is too small and doesn't grip well.

I hear you. So if you start with a longer piece of amsteel, girth hitch a fixed loop to one bridge loop, then splice a stopper in the other end, and bury the (long) tag end full length til it meets the buried tag end of the fixed loop from the other end. Then you could put a Prusik loop on the line, tied or girth hitched into the bridge loop. Is that pretty close to the new Tethrd bridge? Seems like a nice upgrade.

Tethrd_000755-757; Tethrd_000779-781; Tethrd_786-787.



Hunter260
Well-Known Member
Joined: Sep 14, 2019
Messages: 1,586
Location: Ash Flat, AR

Jan 11, 2020 #1



Just put together my copy of the Utilibridge on a fleece saddle. I decided to girth hitch both ends so that I can take it on and off. I also used 1/4 inch amsteel for everything because it's all I had. Works good so far! Easy to diy.

Last edited: Jan 11, 2020

👍 CrackbottomLouis, Ontariofarmer, Wirrex and 2 others

Tethrd_000564.



stone1
Well-Known Member
Joined: Oct 23, 2019
Messages: 220

Jan 17, 2020 #1

For those that saw the Tethrd Phantom at the 2020 ATA show and wanted to get an amsteel prussik bridge(the main difference on the phantom), it can be done.... for about \$20

What is needed--

- 10 FT 1/4 in. amsteel
- 4 FT 3/16in. amsteel

How to do it--

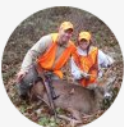
With your 10FT 1/4in. amsteel --splice a 3inch eye within your harness loop; you will need to splice this 10ft piece directly in the middle (5 ft in) because you will have to bury your end through the difference of the rope.

once you've spliced your eye and buried your end you will end up with roughly 4-5 feet of rope. Only roughly 25-30 inches will be needed, so make a stopper knot and cut the rest off.

This will be your bridge.

With your 4FT 3/16 in amsteel-- wrap your 3/16 around your bridge and create a prussik, tie this off on the harness loop on the opposite side of your bridge.

Tethrd_000712-713.



Nugget
Well-Known Member
Joined: Nov 3, 2018
Messages: 450

Jun 6, 2020 #22

I made one as well and have been testing on it for about two weeks. The full burry just gives the amsteel different properties. It holds the amsteel continuous loop well. I also tried it with a beal jammy. The jammy is a no go! It doesn't lock under weight. I haven't noticed any rope fraying, but it's only been a couple weeks.

Last edited: Jun 6, 2020

Tethrd_000531.

Within two weeks of ATA, at least one competitor posted a DIY video on YouTube trying to recreate the bridge. *See generally* Pushing Up Daisies, *DIY Utilibridge*, YOUTUBE (Jan. 19, 2020), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJQKl_KMIlk.; *see also* Tethrd_000660-661:



Nugget
Well-Known Member
Joined: Nov 3, 2018
Messages: 450

Feb 18, 2020 #1

I ordered my amsteel last week and DIYed the bridge this afternoon. Takes about 20 minutes from start to finish and is surprisingly easy to do. The required amsteel can be orderd at amsteelblue.com or through customamsteelproducts.com.

You'll need:

8ft of 1/4" amsteel for the bridge
40in of 1/8" amsteel for the prusik or 44" of 3/16" amsteel. I prefer the 3/16".

The how to on YouTube is by Trevor Byrd at:



It's a great way to update your old 2019 saddle with 2020 technology.

It wasn't long until Cruzr joined. In February 2020, Cruzr launched its website and sold its first saddles, just *one month* after the Amsteel Utilibridge launched at ATA (and after dozens of hunters publicly discussed at length how to recreate it). Saddle hunters immediately compared Cruzr's saddles to Tethrd's Phantom.



cspot
Well-Known Member
Joined: Oct 6, 2019
Messages: 382

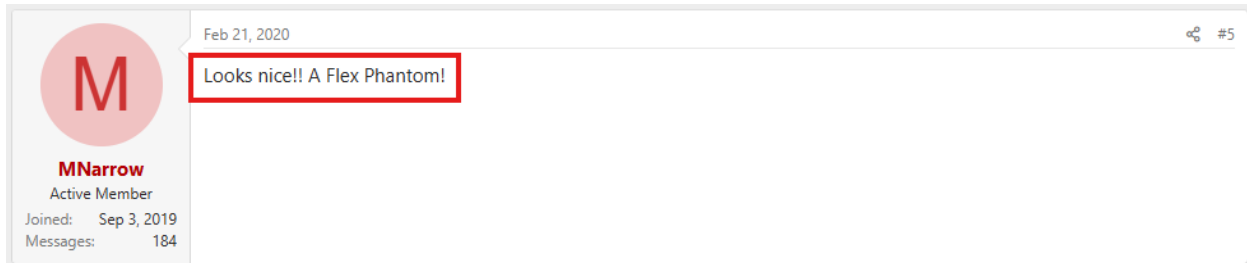
Feb 16, 2020 #1

Didn't know if anyone saw this company before. Supposedly going on sale at the end of this week. Saddle is supposed to be \$165.

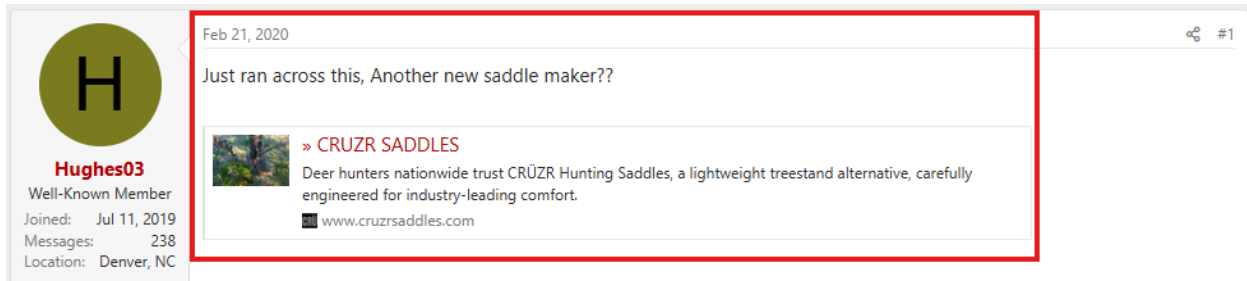


» CRUZR SADDLES
Deer hunters nationwide trust CRÜZR Hunting Saddles, a lightweight treestand alternative, carefully engineered for industry-leading comfort.
www.cruzrsaddles.com

 [alwaysshuntin](#) and [trailblazer75](#)



Tethrd_000561-562.



Tethrd_000559.

Since 2020, several other competitors have similarly tried to copy Tethrd’s innovation. Tethrd has taken affirmative actions to enforce its rights in the 175 Patent against such copiers, including by sending cease and desist letters to numerous competitors, which resulted in the permanent removal of several infringing products from all channels of commerce. In 2024, Tethrd also successfully resolved patent infringement violations regarding 10 separate infringing hunting saddle products sold on Amazon.com through the Amazon Patent Evaluation Express (“APEX”) program². The APEX program resulted in another favorable outcome for Tethrd: all 10 infringing products were immediately delisted from the platform, and none of the infringing products were re-listed or made available for sale again.

In August 2024, Tethrd initiated a patent infringement lawsuit against competitor Latitude Outdoors, LLC. *See generally* Tethrd_000849-898. In *Tethrd LLC v. Latitude Outdoors LLC*,

² Due to the confidential nature of the APEX program, Tethrd cannot disclose the infringing products or company names.

Tethrd alleged that Latitude's Method 2 and Maverick Saddles directly infringed at least claim 1 of the 175 Patent, because both saddles included an "adjustable bridge [that] is built from Dyneema (commonly referred to as Amsteel), one of the strongest fibers on the planet." Tethrd_000854.

As set forth above, objective evidence, including commercial success of Tethrd's Phantom Saddle, long-felt but unresolved needs in the saddle hunting industry, failure of others to solve the problems addressed by the 175 Patent, expert skepticism, and copying by others (including Cruzr), demonstrate the invention's significance and nonobvious nature. Tethrd's Amsteel Utilibridge achieved results where prior attempts failed, and the market's response reflects a clear nexus between the patented features and the product's success.

b. The Correct Priority Date for the 175 Patent

Inexplicably, Cruzr fails to explain how or why it believes the purported "correct" priority date is April 15, 2021. Specifically, U.S. Patent Application 16/736,345 was filed on January 7, 2020, and subsequently the decision granting abandonment was dated September 22, 2020. Before that date, U.S. Patent Application No. 17/022,844 was filed on September 16, 2020, and that application was abandoned on June 2, 2021. Before that date, the 717 Application was filed on April 15, 2021, which issued as U.S. Patent No. 11,504,556 on November 22, 2022. Before that date, U.S. Patent Application No. 17/867,553 was filed on July 18, 2022, and issued as the 175 Patent. Accordingly, the 175 Patent properly claims priority to the earliest application date of January 7, 2020.

Therefore, art published after January 7, 2020, including those cited in pages 14-20 of Cruzr's contentions are not prior art.

III. ENFORCEABILITY CONTENTIONS

Tethrd hereby incorporates by reference its Partial Motion to Dismiss and Memorandum in Support (Dkt. Nos. 61-62), as if fully set forth herein. In short, Cruzr fails to identify any conduct that would support its enforceability contentions.

Further, Cruzr attempts to cherry pick specific forum postings to mischaracterize them as non-cumulative prior art. Generally, to prove inequitable conduct due to failure to disclose, one must establish that the applicant failed to disclose material prior art with intent to mislead. Cruzr fails to do so and instead relies on unsupported assertions that certain inventors had the intent to deceive the patent examiner. Cruzr fails to show that any of the disclosures were material and non-cumulative prior art. For example, “friction hitches” were disclosed in the references cited by the 175 Patent examiner, including in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0162882 (“Shakespeare”), and use of UHMWPE was discussed in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2019/0210696 (“Barnes”).

This disclosure is preliminary, based on Tethrd’s current knowledge, and subject to Tethrd’s right of revision or supplementation, including in response to discovery or investigation of further information, Tethrd’s proposed terms and/or constructions, and any of Tethrd’s positions in this case. Tethrd thus reserves the right to amend or supplement these disclosures in accordance with the relevant rules and as deemed appropriate by the Court and/or parties.

Date: July 23, 2025

By: /s/ Daniel Huynh

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify, on July 23, 2025, I served this document upon all counsel of record via email.

/s/ Daniel Huynh

Daniel Huynh (*pro hac vice*)

Exhibit A: Responses to Defendant's Anticipation and Obviousness Chart of U.S. Patent No. 11,964,175

As set forth in the chart below, Defendant's prior art references identified in Section 1 of its Initial Invalidity and Unenforceability Contentions fail to anticipate or render obvious each of the limitations of the asserted claims of the 175 Patent. If Defendant challenges the disclosures made in the claim chart below, Tethrd reserves the right to respond accordingly. Tethrd reserves the right to supplement or clarify its disclosures, including in response to any amendment to Defendant's invalidity contentions.

U.S. Patent No. 11,964,175	Tethrd's Responses to Defendant's Invalidity Contentions
Claim 1	
1. A bridge rope assembly configured to couple together a tree rope to a first bridge loop and a second bridge loop on a harness, the bridge rope assembly including:	The single video that is cited by Defendant fails to show the claimed bridge rope assembly that includes the limitations below including the claimed main body and a friction hitch. Defendant has not shown why or how any prior art combination would render the claim obvious.
a main body comprising a rope having a first end and a second end, the main body having a splice therein to form an eye loop in the main body, the eye loop being configured to engage the first bridge loop, the main body comprising a first portion including the first end and a second portion including the second end, the first portion extending through the second portion of the main body such that the first end is positioned within the second portion adjacent to the second end; and	No single reference (including the AboristSite experiments, the Samson instructions, the Hunting Saddle Modifications video, the various SaddleHunter forum posts, or any other identified reference) discloses the claimed rope bridge assembly. In fact, the prior art fails to disclose a bridge rope assembly that includes the claimed main body having a splice to form an eye loop configured to engage the first bridge loop. The prior art also fails to disclose the claimed main body comprising a first portion extending through the second portion of the main body such that the first end is positioned within the second portion adjacent to the second end.
a friction hitch being positioned on the main body between the second end and the eye loop, the friction hitch being configured to engage the second bridge loop, the friction hitch comprising a closed loop.	The prior art does not disclose this limitation. For example, the prior art does not disclose using a friction hitch on the claimed main body.
Claim 2	
2. The bridge rope assembly according to claim 1, wherein the rope has a length from the first end to the second end between 72.0 inches and 126.0 inches.	None of the prior art discloses the limitations in claim 1. For example, the Samson prior art does not disclose the claimed main body, engaging a

	bridge loop, or the claimed friction hitch. The Mantis 30” bridge reference does not include the claimed main body or the claimed friction hitch.
Claim 3	
3. The bridge rope assembly according to claim 1, wherein a distance of the eye loop to the second end is between 24.0 inches and 40.0 inches.	See responses to claims 1 and 2.
Claim 4	
4. The bridge rope assembly according to claim 3, wherein the main body includes a stop knot in the second portion adjacent to the second end.	See responses to claims 1 and 2.
Claim 5	
5. The bridge rope assembly according to claim 4, further including a securing member being positioned on the main body at a juncture of the first and second ends to retain the first and second ends at a static position relative to each other.	See responses to claims 1 and 2.
Claim 6	
6. The bridge rope assembly according to claim 4, wherein the closed loop comprises a single rope being formed into the closed loop.	See responses to claims 1 and 2.
Claim 11	
11. The bridge rope assembly according to claim 1, wherein the main body is comprised of UHMWPE.	See responses to claims 1 and 2.