United States of America

To Promote the Progress of Science and Useful Arts

The Director

of the United States Patent and Trademark Office has received an application for a patent for a new and useful invention. The title and description of the invention are enclosed. The requirements of law have been complied with, and it has been determined that a patent on the invention shall be granted under the law.

Therefore, this United States

Patent

grants to the person(s) having title to this patent the right to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale, or selling the invention throughout the United States of America or importing the invention into the United States of America, and if the invention is a process, of the right to exclude others from using, offering for sale or selling throughout the United States of America, products made by that process, for the term set forth in 35 U.S.C. 154(a)(2) or (c)(1), subject to the payment of maintenance fees as provided by 35 U.S.C. 41(b). See the Maintenance Fee Notice on the inside of the cover.

Acting Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

Maintenance Fee Notice

If the application for this patent was filed on or after December 12, 1980, maintenance fees are due three years and six months, seven years and six months, and eleven years and six months after the date of this grant, or within a grace period of six months thereafter upon payment of a surcharge as provided by law. The amount, number and timing of the maintenance fees required may be changed by law or regulation. Unless payment of the applicable maintenance fee is received in the United States Patent and Trademark Office on or before the date the fee is due or within a grace period of six months thereafter, the patent will expire as of the end of such grace period.

Patent Term Notice

If the application for this patent was filed on or after June 8, 1995, the term of this patent begins on the date on which this patent issues and ends twenty years from the filing date of the application or, if the application contains a specific reference to an earlier filed application or applications under 35 U.S.C. 120, 121, 365(c), or 386(c), twenty years from the filing date of the earliest such application ("the twenty-year term"), subject to the payment of maintenance fees as provided by 35 U.S.C. 41(b), and any extension as provided by 35 U.S.C. 154(b) or 156 or any disclaimer under 35 U.S.C. 253.

If this application was filed prior to June 8, 1995, the term of this patent begins on the date on which this patent issues and ends on the later of seventeen years from the date of the grant of this patent or the twenty-year term set forth above for patents resulting from applications filed on or after June 8, 1995, subject to the payment of maintenance fees as provided by 35 U.S.C. 41(b) and any extension as provided by 35 U.S.C. 156 or any disclaimer under 35 U.S.C. 253.

US012280840B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Blanchard

(10) **Patent No.: US 12,280,840 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: Apr. 22, 2025**

(54) **GROUSER TRACTION CLEAT THAT CINCHES ONTO RUBBER CONTINUOUS TRACKS**

(71) Applicant: **John Paul Blanchard**, Blanchard, ID (US)

(72) Inventor: **John Paul Blanchard**, Blanchard, ID (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 463 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **17/736,732**

(22) Filed: **May 4, 2022**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2022/0258817 A1 Aug. 18, 2022

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 17/094,352, filed on Nov. 10, 2020, now abandoned.

(60) Provisional application No. 62/935,786, filed on Nov. 15, 2019.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
B62D 55/28 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***B62D 55/286*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC B62D 55/26; B62D 55/28; B62D 55/283; B62D 55/286
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

2,967,737 A *	1/1961	Moore	B62D 55/275	301/44.3
5,033,801 A *	7/1991	Beeley	B62D 55/202	305/180
8,424,981 B1 *	4/2013	Stratton, Jr.	B62D 55/286	305/191
2004/0140717 A1 *	7/2004	McNutt	B62D 55/286	305/187
2018/0319450 A1 *	11/2018	Wilson	B60C 27/20	

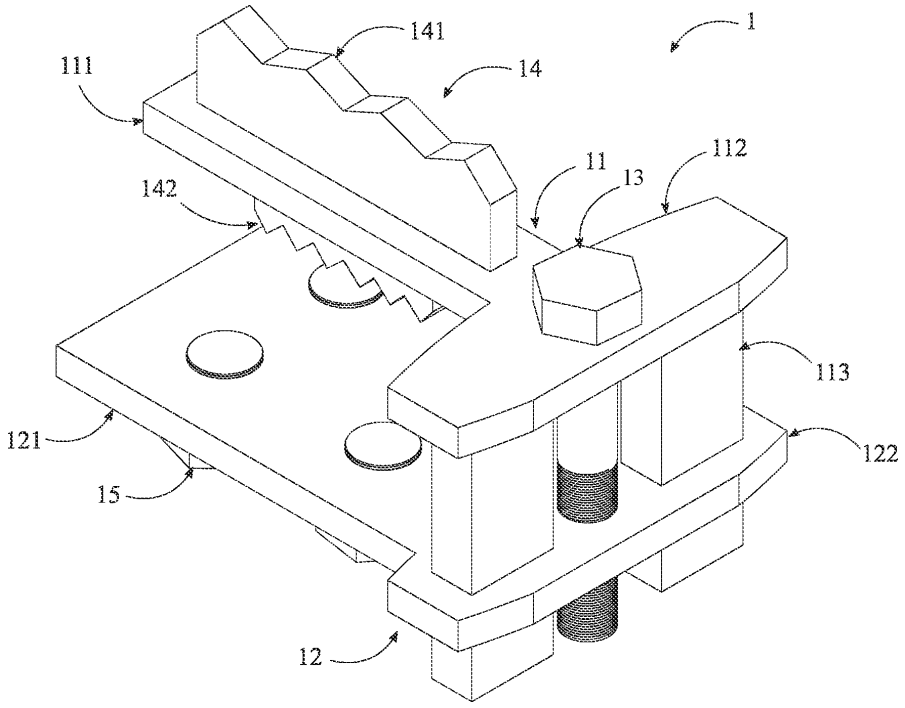
* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner — S. Joseph Morano
Assistant Examiner — Emily G. Castonguay

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A grouser traction cleat that cinches onto vehicle tracks is presented. The grouser traction cleat apparatus comprises a first mounting plate, a second mounting plate, an adjustment element, and a cleat insert. The first mounting plate comprises a plurality of adjustment guides. The second mounting plate comprises a plurality of guide slots. The plurality of adjustment guides is distributed about the first adjustment plate. The plurality of adjustment slots is distributed about the second adjustment plate. The plurality of adjustment guides is slidably connected along the plurality of adjustment slots. The first mounting plate and the second mounting plate are operatively connected to each other along the adjustment element. The cleat insert is connected along the first mounting plate, opposite to the second mounting plate.

9 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



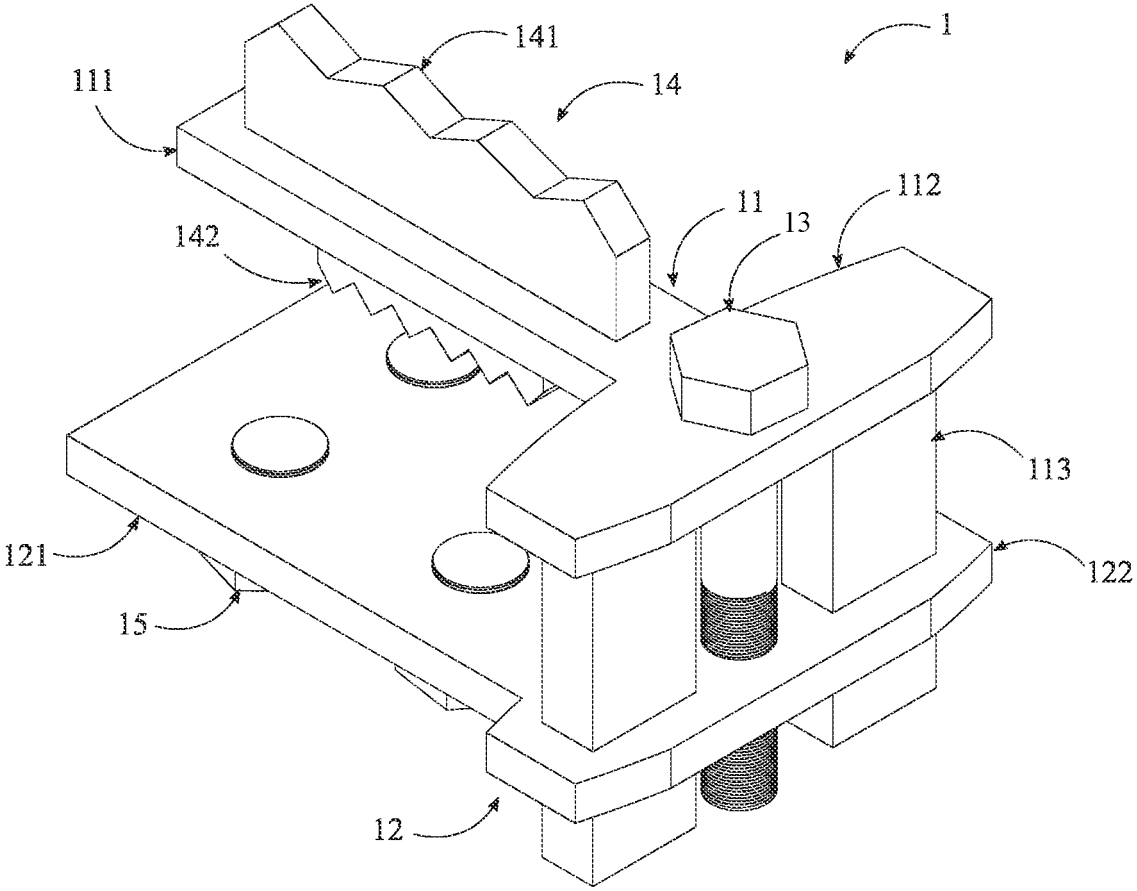


FIG. 1

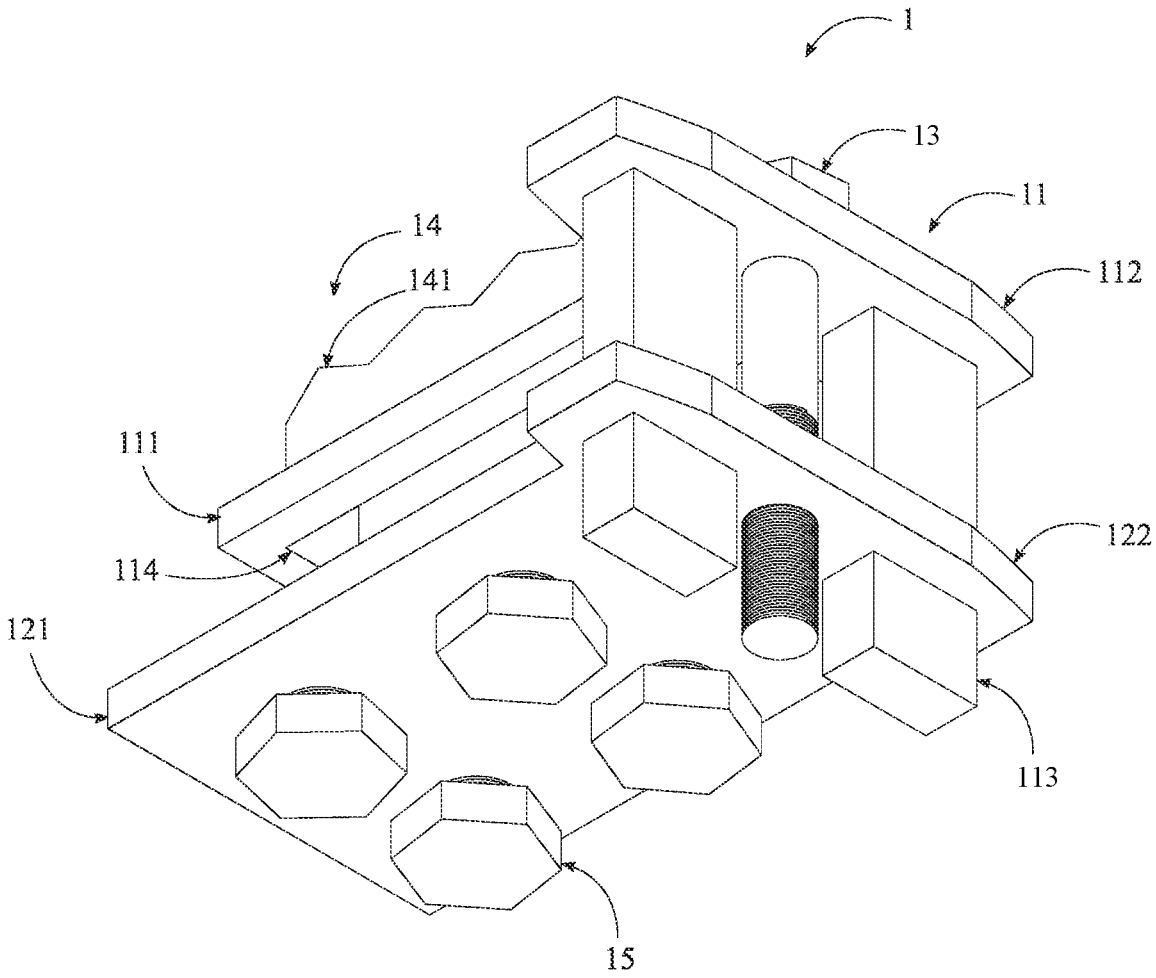


FIG. 2

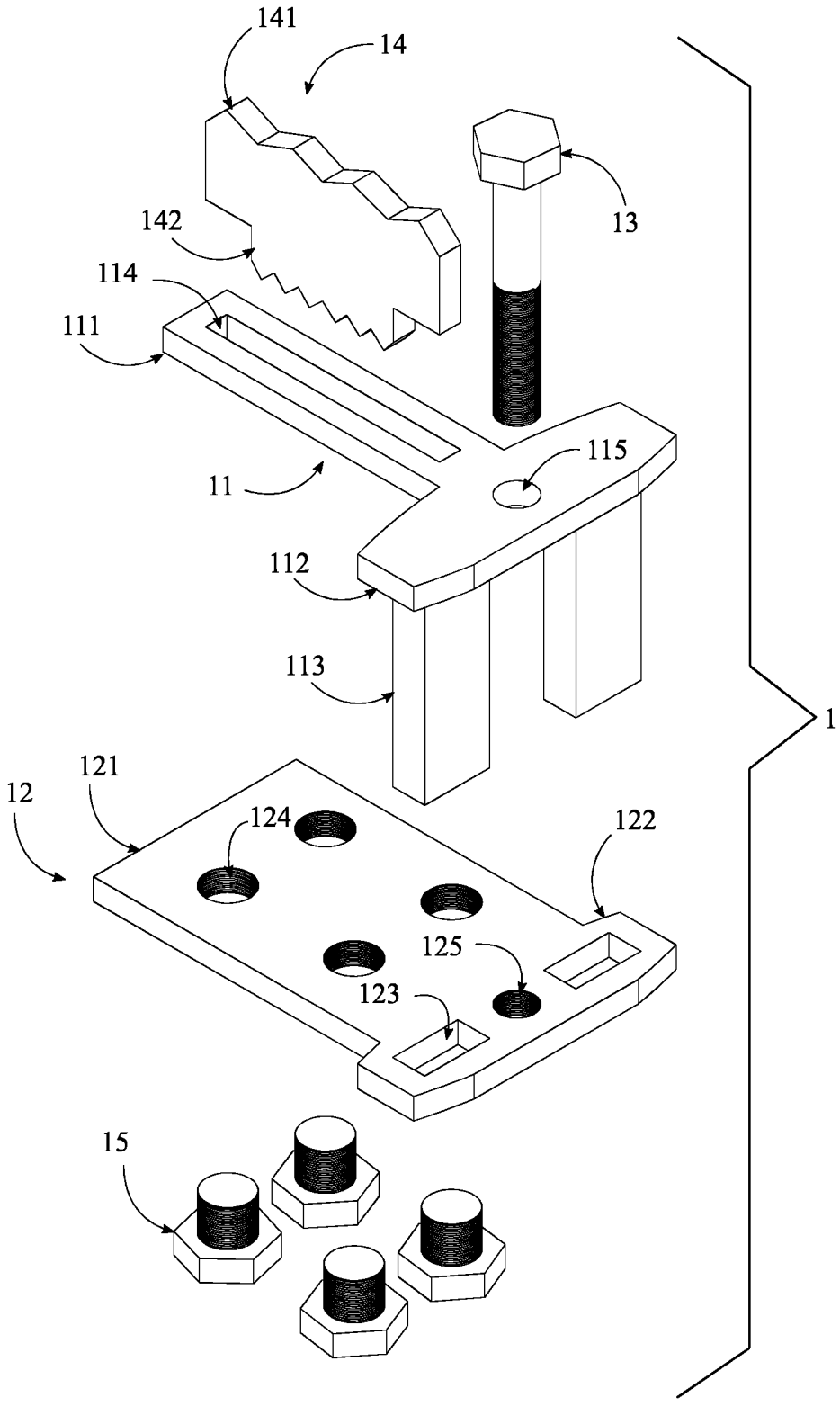


FIG. 3

GROUSER TRACTION CLEAT THAT CINCHES ONTO RUBBER CONTINUOUS TRACKS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

Generally, the present disclosure relates to the field of wheel substitutes for land vehicles. More specifically, the present disclosure relates to methods, apparatuses, and devices for providing traction to a tracked vehicle.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Weather events such as rain, snow, and ice dramatically affect the stopping distance of a vehicle. The driver's capability to complete a smooth and safe stop is severely limited due to reduced track plate traction. In order to stop safely, the vehicle's continuous rubber tracks must maintain traction by maintaining a contact with the road surface while rolling. When handling slippery winter roads, the keys to safety are slower speeds, and gentler stops and turns. Currently, there are a number of attempts for solutions to increase the traction of rubber-tracked construction vehicles. Some of these solutions attempt to amalgamate with the OEM rubber tracks with permanent or semi-permanent devices that are not only cumbersome and laborious to rapidly place on and off, but these solutions fail to meet the needs of the industry because using such devices potentially destroy the OEM rubber track, thus the integrity of the steel belts within them. In addition, storing seasonal rubber tracks that weigh upwards of 400 pounds, are cumbersome to move due to their size and mass, create challenges in itself. Other solutions attempt to remedy the issue with drilled in or self-tapping studs for icy surfaces, but these solutions are unable to meet the needs of the industry because they may not accommodate the variables with different terrain surfaces, give the ability to ascend or descend grades and the heads easily shear off with turning on rough surfaces. Still, other solutions seek to recommend winter rubber tracks, but these solutions also fail to meet industry needs because they are extremely costly, laborious to install and uninstall, cumbersome to store, and again do not meet all the needs for multiple surface conditions with the flexibility to rapidly change them when the conditions necessitate it.

Existing techniques for providing traction to a tracked vehicle are deficient with regard to several aspects. For instance, current technologies do not provide an easy and efficient way to increase traction between a track of a vehicle and a road surface. Furthermore, current technologies do not provide a traction device which may be easily stored and readily accessible. Therefore, there is a need for improved methods, apparatuses, and devices for providing traction to a tracked vehicle that may overcome one or more of the above-mentioned problems and/or limitations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a grouser traction cleat apparatus that removably attaches along any suitable vehicle track. The grouser traction cleat apparatus comprises a first mounting plate, a second mounting plate, an adjustment element, and a cleat insert. The first mounting plate comprises a cleat receiver, a first adjustment plate, and a plurality of adjustment guides. The second mounting plate comprises a fastening plate, a second adjustment plate, and a plurality of guide slots. The cleat receiver is connected adjacent to the first adjustment plate. The plurality of adjustment guides is distributed about the first adjustment plate. The fastening plate is connected adjacent to the second adjustment plate. The plurality of adjustment slots is distributed about the second adjustment plate. The plurality of adjustment guides is slidably connected along the plurality of adjustment slots. The first mounting plate and the second mounting plate are operatively connected to each other along the adjustment element, where the adjustment element is configured to adjust the first mounting plate from the second mounting plate to form a specified adjustment distance between the first mounting plate and the second mounting plate. The cleat insert is connected along the cleat receiver, opposite to the second mounting plate.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a top perspective view of the present invention.

FIG. **2** is a bottom perspective view of the present invention.

FIG. **3** is an exploded view of the present invention.

DETAIL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE INVENTION

All illustrations of the drawings are for the purpose of describing selected versions of the present invention and are not intended to limit the scope of the present invention. The present invention is to be described in detail and is provided in a manner that establishes a thorough understanding of the present invention. There may be aspects of the present invention that may be practiced or utilized without the implementation of some features as they are described. It should be understood that some details have not been described in detail in order to not unnecessarily obscure focus of the invention. References herein to "the preferred embodiment", "one embodiment", "some embodiments", or "alternative embodiments" should be considered to be illustrating aspects of the present invention that may potentially vary in some instances, and should not be considered to be limiting to the scope of the present invention as a whole.

In reference to FIGS. **1**-**3**, the present invention is a grouser traction cleat apparatus **1** that removably attaches along any suitable vehicle track. The grouser traction cleat apparatus **1** comprises a first mounting plate **11**, a second mounting plate **12**, an adjustment element **13**, and a cleat insert **14**. The first mounting plate **11** comprises a cleat receiver **111**, a first adjustment plate **112**, and a plurality of adjustment guides **113**. The second mounting plate **12** comprises a fastening plate **121**, a second adjustment plate **122**, and a plurality of guide slots **123**. The cleat receiver **111** is connected adjacent to the first adjustment plate **112**. The plurality of adjustment guides **113** is distributed about the first adjustment plate **112**. The fastening plate **121** is connected adjacent to the second adjustment plate **122**. The plurality of adjustment slots is distributed about the second adjustment plate **122**. The plurality of adjustment guides **113** is slidably connected along the plurality of adjustment slots. The first mounting plate **11** and the second mounting plate **12** are operatively connected to each other along the adjustment element **13**, where the adjustment element **13** is configured to adjust the first mounting plate **11** from the second mounting plate **12** to form a specified adjustment distance between the first mounting plate **11** and the second mounting plate **12**. The cleat insert **14** is connected along the cleat receiver **111**, opposite to the second mounting plate **12**. In the preferred embodiment, the grouser traction cleat apparatus **1** specifically attaches along rubber vehicle tracks, such that the first mounting plate **11** and the second mount-

ing plate **12** sufficient cinches and secures along the rubber vehicle track. In the preferred embodiment, the grouser traction cleat apparatus **1** is made out of any suitable and durable material such as, but not limited to steel or any other suitable material. In the preferred embodiment, the grouser traction cleat apparatus **1** is scaled to any size to fit any suitable vehicle track.

In the preferred embodiment, the first mounting plate **11** takes the form of any suitable mounting member that secures along one side of the vehicle track. In the preferred embodiment, the first mounting plate **11** mounts along the exterior side of the vehicle track. In the preferred embodiment, the second mounting plate **12** takes the form of any suitable mounting member that secures along the internal side of the vehicle track, opposite from the first mounting plate **11**. In the preferred embodiment, the adjustment element **13** takes the form of any suitable adjustment implement, such as, but not limited to bolt adjustment members, or any other suitable adjustment member that adjustably connects the first mounting plate **11** to the second mounting plate **12** together, such that the grouser traction cleat apparatus **1** can adjust the first mounting plate **11** from the second mounting plate **12** to form a specified adjustment distance between the first mounting plate **11** and the second mounting plate **12**. More specifically, the specified adjustment distance is dependent on the vehicle track thickness that the first mounting plate **11** and the second mounting plate **12** are mounting along. In the preferred embodiment, the cleat insert **14** takes the form of any suitable traction member that serves as the main traction element **141** of the grouser traction apparatus. Additionally, the cleat insert **14** also serves as the main grasping element **142** that aids in cinching and securing the first mounting plate **11** along the external side of the vehicle track. In various embodiments, the cleat insert **14** takes the form of various traction cleat shapes or profiles suitable for various applications.

In the preferred embodiment, the cleat receiver **111** serves as the main connection site of the first mounting plate **11** in orienting and attaching the cleat insert **14** along the external side of the vehicle track. In the preferred embodiment, the first adjustment plate **112** supports the attachment and engagement of the adjustment element **13** along the first mounting plate **11**. In the preferred embodiment, the plurality of guides takes the form of extruded guide blocks projecting from the first adjustment plate **112**, where the plurality of guides is configured to slidably connect along the plurality of guide slots **123** of the second mounting plate **12**. More specifically, the plurality of guides serves as structural implements that slidably reinforces and connects the first mounting plate **11** to the second mounting plate **12**.

In the preferred embodiment, the fastening plate **121** of the second mounting plate **12** serves as the main connection site of the second mounting plate **12** in orienting and attaching the second mounting plate **12** along the internal side of the vehicle track. In the preferred embodiment, the second adjustment plate **122** supports the attachment and engagement of the adjustment element **13** along the second mounting plate **12**. In the preferred embodiment, the plurality of guide slots **123** takes the form of slider slots that slidably connects along the plurality of adjustment guides **113**.

In the preferred embodiment, the cleat insert **14** comprises a traction element **141**. The traction element **141** is terminally connected along the cleat receiver **111**, opposite to the second mounting plate **12**. The cleat insert **14** further comprises a grasping element **142**. The grasping element **142** is terminally connected along the cleat receiver **111**, opposite to the traction element **141**. In the preferred embodiment, the traction element **141** takes the form of the primary traction and cleat implement that project externally from the first mounting plate **11**. More specifically, the traction element **141** provides traction to the grouser traction cleat apparatus **1** attached along the vehicle tracks. In the preferred embodiment, the grasping element **142** takes the form of any suitable grasping element **142** that allows the cleat insert **14** to engage along the external side of the vehicle track. This secures the first mounting plate **11** along the external side of the vehicle track.

In the preferred embodiment, the grouser traction cleat apparatus **1** further comprises a plurality of fastening elements **15**. The plurality of fastening elements **15** is distributed about the fastening plate **121**, where the plurality of fastening elements **15** is configured to adjust the fastening plate **121** in a loose configuration or a tightened configuration. The second mounting plate **12** comprises a plurality of fastening apertures **124**. The plurality of fastening apertures **124** is distributed about the fastening plate **121**. The plurality of fastening elements **15** is operatively connected to the plurality of fastening apertures **124**, where the plurality of fastening elements **15** is configured to adjust the fastening plate **121** in a loose configuration or a tightened configuration. In the preferred embodiment, the plurality of fastening elements **15** takes the form of any suitable fastening implement in securing and grasping the second mounting plate **12** along the internal side of the vehicle track. In the preferred embodiment, the plurality of fastening elements **15** is a plurality of bolt fasteners. In this embodiment, the plurality of bolt fasteners threads along the plurality of fastening apertures **124**, where the plurality of bolt fasteners is configured to loosen and tighten along the plurality of fastening apertures **124** in order to further grasp or secure the second mounting plate **12** along the internal side of the vehicle track.

In the preferred embodiment, the first mounting plate **11** further comprises a mounting slot **114**. The mounting slot **114** traverses through the cleat receiver **111**. The cleat insert **14** is connected along the mounting slot **114**. In the preferred embodiment, the mounting slot **114** takes the form of an attachment slot that allows the cleat insert **14** to install along the cleat receiver **111**. The cleat insert **14** is then attached along the mounting slot **114** through any suitable fastening means, such as, but not limited to welding, or any other suitable fastening means.

The first mounting plate **11** comprises a mounting aperture **115**. The second mounting plate **12** comprises an adjustment aperture **125**. The mounting aperture **115** traverses through the first adjustment plate **112**. The adjustment aperture **125** traverses through the second adjustment plate **122**. The adjustment aperture **125** and the mounting aperture **115** is operatively connected to each other through the adjustment element **13**, where the adjustment aperture **125** and the mounting aperture **115** are configured to adjust the first mounting plate **11** from the second mounting plate **12** to form the specified adjustment distance between the first mounting plate **11** and the second mounting plate **12**. In the preferred embodiment, the adjustment element **13** is an adjustment bolt that installs along the mounting aperture **115** of the first mounting plate **11** and the adjustment aperture **125** of the second mounting plate **12**. The adjustment bolt threads along the adjustment aperture **125** such that the adjustment bolt may lengthen or shorten the specified adjustment distance.

Although the invention has been explained in relation to its preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that many

other possible modifications and variations can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as hereinafter claimed.

What is claimed is:

1. A grouser traction cleat apparatus comprising:

a first mounting plate;

a second mounting plate;

an adjustment element;

a cleat insert;

the first mounting plate comprising a cleat receiver, a first adjustment plate, a plurality of adjustment guides, and a first mounting surface;

the second mounting plate comprising a fastening plate, a second adjustment plate, and a plurality of guide slots;

the cleat receiver being connected adjacent to the first adjustment plate;

the plurality of adjustment guides being distributed about the first adjustment plate;

the fastening plate being connected adjacent to the second adjustment plate;

the plurality of adjustment slots being distributed about the second adjustment plate;

the plurality of adjustment guides being slidably connected along the plurality of adjustment slots;

the first mounting plate and the second mounting plate being operatively connected to each other along the adjustment element, wherein the adjustment element is configured to adjust the first mounting plate from the second mounting plate to form a specified adjustment distance between the first mounting plate and the second mounting plate; and

the cleat insert being connected along the cleat receiver, opposite to the second mounting plate.

2. The grouser traction cleat apparatus as claimed in claim **1** comprising:

the cleat insert comprising a traction element; and

the traction element being terminally connected along the cleat receiver, opposite to the second mounting plate.

3. The grouser traction cleat apparatus as claimed in claim **2** comprising:

the cleat insert comprising a grasping element; and

the grasping element being terminally connected along the cleat receiver, opposite to the traction element.

4. The grouser traction cleat apparatus as claimed in claim **1** comprising:

a plurality of fastening elements; and

the plurality of fastening elements being distributed about the fastening plate, wherein the plurality of fastening elements is configured to adjust the fastening plate in a loose configuration or a tightened configuration.

5. The grouser traction cleat apparatus as claimed in claim **4** comprising:

the second mounting plate comprising a plurality of fastening apertures;

the plurality of fastening apertures being distributed about the fastening plate; and

the plurality of fastening elements being operatively connected to the plurality of fastening apertures, wherein the plurality of fastening elements is configured to adjust the fastening plate in a loose configuration or a tightened configuration.

6. The grouser traction cleat apparatus as claimed in claim **5**, wherein the plurality of fastening elements is a plurality of bolt fasteners.

7. The grouser traction cleat apparatus as claimed in claim **1** comprising:

the first mounting plate comprising a mounting slot;

the mounting slot traversing through the cleat receiver; and

the cleat insert being connected along the mounting slot.

8. The grouser traction cleat apparatus as claimed in claim **1** comprising:

the first mounting plate comprising a mounting aperture;

the second mounting plate comprising an adjustment aperture;

the mounting aperture traversing through the first adjustment plate;

the adjustment aperture traversing through the second adjustment plate; and

the adjustment aperture and the mounting aperture being operatively connected to each other through the adjustment element, wherein the adjustment aperture and the mounting aperture are configured to adjust the first mounting plate from the second mounting plate to form the specified adjustment distance between the first mounting plate and the second mounting plate.

9. The grouser traction cleat apparatus as claimed in claim **8**, wherein the adjustment element is an adjustment bolt.

* * * * *