

Geartriever

Egress Systems of New Mexico has designed the *Geartriever*, a device to help retrieve gear (such as slings and runners) that would normally be left behind. The Geartriever is a small, plastic, conical device that fits on the end of a climbing rope (figure 4). A tension band is attached to one end of the sling. When the rope is pulled down after rappelling, the sling, Geartriever, and rope are recovered. Slings, runners, and

even carabiners can be recovered when using fixed anchors, trees, or rock horns (figures 5a and 5b) as rappel anchors.

The Geartriever's inventor and manufacturer has a patent. He stated that he would not sell this device in the United States because of legal issues.



Figure 4—The Geartriever can recover slings and runners. A sling is passed through a fixed anchor. The Geartriever is attached to the end of the climbing rope. A tension band is placed on one end of the sling. When the rope is pulled, the sling comes with it.



Figure 5a—A rock horn is being used as an anchor point in this demonstration of the Geartriever.



Figure 5b—The Geartriever is pulling a sling and carabiners from a rock horn.

Conclusions

The Center will continue to monitor the negotiated rulemaking process for a final policy on fixed anchors in the wilderness. When a final policy or specific climbing plan requires removing fixed anchors or climbing gear (such as slings and runners), the center can ask industry and designers to provide needed devices.

About the Author

Mary Ann Davies is a Project Leader working for the Facilities, Recreation, Fire, and Watershed, Soil, and Air Programs. She received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering with a minor in industrial and management engineering from Montana State University in 1988. Her Forest Service career began in the Pacific Northwest Region where she worked with facilities, tramways, fire, and recreation. Mary Ann worked for the Rocky Mountain Research Station's Fire Sciences Laboratory in Missoula before coming to MTDC in 1998.

Sources of Information

Background documents, Federal Register Notice, and meeting note summaries:

http://www.wilderness.net/issues/fs/fixed_anchor

Access Fund position statement:

<http://www.accessfund.org>

Leave No Trace: Minimize Climbing Impacts:

<http://www.lnt.org/RockClimbing/RockClimb.html>

Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America (ORCA) position statement:

<http://www.orca.org/govt/positions/5.html>

Library Card

Davies, Mary Ann. 2001. Fixed anchors in wilderness. Tech. Rep. 0123-2826-MTDC. Missoula, MT: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Missoula Technology and Development Center. 6 electronic p.

Describes an unsuccessful search for products that could eliminate the need for fixed climbing anchors in designated wilderness areas. Allowing fixed anchors, expansion bolts, and hangers in designated wilderness is controversial. Advocates of fixed anchors believe the anchors are essential for safety. Opponents of fixed anchors in wilderness base their argument in the statutory language of the Wilderness Act of 1964, which prohibits "installations" for other than administrative purposes. The Missoula Technology and Development Center located one product, the "Gearretriever", to retrieve gear (such as slings and runners) that would normally be left behind. The author thinks the likelihood of finding a technical solution that would make fixed anchors obsolete is slim.

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