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FRETTING-WEAR RESISTANT BEACON LID

Abstract

A connection system for a lid in a beacon housing. The lid is connected to the housing at a tab at a first end, after a lip of the lid is placed under a shelf at its second end. The tab has a cross-bore for receiving a connection pin through both the cross-bore and corresponding holes in the housing which form a continuous passage. The lid is placed under tension to reduce relative vibration between the lid and the housing. A set screw is placed within the tab to place a force on the connection pin. Further set screws are distributed about the lid and place the lid in tension relative to the housing. The lid can be removed by reducing the tension provided by the set screws, removing the connection pin, and adjusting the lid such that it is no longer under the shelf of the housing.

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Background/Summary

SUMMARY

[0001] The present invention is directed to an assembly. The assembly comprises a beacon, an elongate housing and a lid. The beacon is configured to emit a dipole magnetic field. The elongate housing extends from a first to a second end, and has an exterior surface within which a cavity is formed. The cavity receives the beacon and has an open mouth that joins the exterior surface of the housing. The lid is configured to close the mouth of the cavity. The lid comprises a tab defining a first and second bore. The first bore is non-parallel to and intersects the second bore. The elongate housing defines a pair of aligned bores, wherein the first bore of the tab forms a continuous passage with the pair of aligned bores when the lid is covering the mouth of the cavity.

[0002] In another aspect the invention is directed to a method of joining a lid to a housing. The housing has an open mouth exposing a cavity. The method comprises placing the lid over the open mouth, placing a pin through a first aperture in the housing, a first bore in the lid, and a second aperture in the housing, placing a set screw within a second bore in the lid, and placing a force on the pin with the set screw. The first bore, first aperture, and second aperture form a continuous passage when the lid is placed over the open mouth. The second bore is non-parallel to and intersecting with the first bore.

[0003] In another aspect the invention is directed to a method. The method comprises placing a beacon into a cavity in an elongate housing through an open mouth, covering the open mouth with a lid, securing the lid to the elongate housing with a component, and thereafter, placing a set screw into the lid such that placement of the set screw applies a force to the component.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] FIG. **1** is a top side view of a beacon housing with a lid attached thereto, in accordance with the present invention.

[0005] FIG. **2** is an exploded view of the beacon housing of FIG. **1**.

[0006] FIG. **3** is a partially cross-sectional side view, with the upper half of the figure shown in section such that the cavity for placement of the beacon is shown with the lid on.

[0007] FIG. **4** is a top side perspective view of the lid for use with the beacon housing of FIG. **1**.

[0008] FIG. **5** is a side plan view of the beacon housing.

[0009] FIG. **6** is a top view of the beacon housing with the lid removed and components at the bottom of the cavity shown.

[0010] FIG. **7**A is a top view of the beacon housing with the lid in a first position.

[0011] FIG. **7**B is a top view of the beacon housing with the led in a second position.

[0012] FIG. **8** is a top view of the lid shown in FIG. **4**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0013] In horizontal directional drilling (“HDD”) applications, a transmitter may be placed near a boring tool. Electromagnetic signals sent from the transmitter may be received at an above ground location to allow the path of the boring tool to be tracked and mapped. Typically, the transmitter is placed in a subassembly and protected from the underground environment. This subassembly is often called a “beacon housing.”

[0014] A typical beacon housing will allow the beacon to be placed such that electromagnetic

tracking signals can be sent, but provides enough space for the operation of the boring tool to continue unabated. As a result, the beacon is often placed away from the centerline of a beacon housing, allowing more space for mechanical components such as drilling rods, or space for drilling fluid to be transmitted to the boring tool. As a result of this activity, and the boring activity itself, the beacon housing is subject to significant movement and vibration.

[0015] Small amplitude wear between a below-ground beacon housing and the lid through which a beacon is installed into that housing, may cause wear to the lid. This wear, referred to herein as "fretting", also results in components, such as bolts and other fasteners used to retain the lid, to loosen and wear as well, amplifying the problem as the apparatus is used.

[0016] The apparatus described herein places one or more adjustable screws along the length of the beacon housing lid to remove the slack from the system. By pre-loading the components, relative vibration is minimized and fretting wear reduced.

[0017] In current beacon housings, a lip is utilized to provide retention at one end, with a bolt or other fastener at the other. The current invention utilizes set screws, as shown in the figures, to place these components in shear and compression, while putting the set screws in compression as well, which avoids the need to remove the screws.

[0018] Turning now to the figures, a beacon housing **10** is shown therein. The beacon housing **10** extends from a first end **12** to a second end **14**. Formed thereon, and extending between the first **12** and second **14** ends, is a housing lid **20**. The housing lid **20** is adapted to cover a cavity **18** formed in the beacon housing **10**, in which a beacon may be placed. One or more cutting teeth **16** may be disposed near the second, or downhole end **14**.

[0019] The lid, as best shown in FIGS. **2**, **4** and **8**, extends from a first end **22** to a second end **24**. As shown, the lid **20** contains a narrow longitudinal slot **21** which promotes the transmission of an electromagnetic signal from the beacon to an above ground location with minimal impact on structural integrity of the beacon housing **10**.

[0020] At the first end **22**, a cross pin **26** or connection pin is placed through an aperture **30** in the housing **10** and an aperture **32** in the lid **20** to retain the lid **20** over the beacon cavity **18**. The aperture **32** and aperture **30** together form a cross hole, whereby the cross pin **26**, when fitted through the cross hole, prevents removal of the lid **20**.

[0021] A top hole **40** is disposed at the second end **22** of the lid **20**. The top hole **40** intersects the aperture **30** in the lid. A set screw **42** may be placed within the top hole **40** to apply a force to the cross pin **26**. The cross pin **26** may be a caliper bolt, heavy duty coil pin, or normal bolt, and is the only part required to be completely removed in order to detach the lid **20** from the housing **10**.

[0022] The set screw **42** may have a conical nose or another shape of nose configured for application of wedging forces to the cross pin **26**. The set screw **42** contacts the cross pin **26** at an angle, removing slack which may exist in the interface between the cross pin **26** and the lid **20**. Removing the slack reduces or eliminates fretting wear due to metal-to-metal vibration contact and prevents the cross pin **26** from backing out of the apertures **30**, **32**.

[0023] At the second end **24** a lip **28** may be placed below an overhanging shelf **34** on the housing **10** to provide retention. When installing the lid **20**, the lip **28** is placed under the shelf **34**, then the first end **22** is positioned such that the apertures **30**, **32** are aligned, allowing placement of the cross pin **26**.

[0024] Likewise, removing the cross pin **26** allows the first end **22** of the lid **20** to be pulled away from the housing **10**, and the lip **28** then pulled from under the shelf **34**. In order to remove the cross pin **26**, and thus the lid **20**, the set screw **42** need only be loosened to remove the tension on the cross pin, not removed entirely.

[0025] FIGS. **7**A and **7**B show the lid being removed without removing set screw **42**. In FIG. **7**B, the lid **20** is positioned in a second position, ready for connection to the housing **10** through the use of the cross pin **26**. However, as the cross pin **26** has been removed due to loosening of the set screw **42**, the lid **20** can be moved into a first position as shown in FIG. **7**A. The second end **24**

may then be tilted away from the housing **10** and removed, allowing access to the cavity **18**.
[0026] The apparatus further comprises a plurality of lid set screws **50**. Each lid set screw **50** engages with a hole **52**. The lid set screws **50** are configured to engage against the housing **10** at various contact points, pushing the lid **20** away from the housing **10**. When the set screws **50** press against the housing **10**, pressure is applied to the lip **28** and the cross pin **26**, further protecting against fretting. In addition, these lid set screws **50** may engage with contact points such as depressions **54** formed in the housing **10** at the location where they engage, providing a locking mechanism. The set screws **50** may be loosened when the lid **20** is removed, as shown in FIGS. **7**A and **7**B.
[0027] Thus, the set screw **42** and lid set screws **50** have two general configurations. In the first configuration, the set screw **42** places a force on the cross-pin **26** and the lid set screws **50** extend to contact the housing at a contact point. This configuration places the lid **20** in tension as it is covering the cavity **18**. The cross-pin **26** is subjected to a shear force preventing its removal and the lid **20** itself is in tension due to the set screws **50** causing a force at the cross-pin **26** and the interface between the lip **28** and shelf **34**.
[0028] In a second configuration, the set screw **42** and lid set screws **50** do not apply a force—they are “loosened” from the first configuration. In this second configuration, the cross-pin **26** can be removed as desired, allowing the lid **20** to be adjusted such that the lip **28** is no longer under the shelf **34** of the housing, allowing removal of the lid **20** without the actual removal of any set screw.
[0029] Alternatively, or in addition to the set screws **42**, **50** used herein, a set screw may be placed at the second end **24** of the lid **20** to engage with lands formed in the housing **10** near the lip **28**. When set, such a set screw may provide force to cause the lid **20** to pop up when the cross pin **26** is removed, or may adjust the pressure between the lid **20** and housing **10** when the cross pin **26** is installed.
[0030] Finally, another alternative may involve set screws being used against a surface of the lid **20**, either at the first end **22** or second end **24** (or both), to reduce front-rear movement of the lid relative to the housing **10**. This orientation may be used alone or in combination with other elements disclosed herein. Preferably, the set screw **42** would be used with such a length-wise set screw arrangement.
[0031] Likewise, set screws may be used along the side of the lid, pushing the lid to one side and limiting movement in the same way. In this embodiment, the lid **20** has sideways play when placed above the cavity **18**. In one orientation, the lid may be placed such that it can be removed, but when moved to the side, it becomes locked in place. When this side-to-side play is removed (to decrease fretting), the lid may also be secured such that it remains placed over the cavity during operation.
[0032] The various features and alternative details of construction of the apparatuses described herein for the practice of the present technology will readily occur to the skilled artisan in view of the foregoing discussion, and it is to be understood that even though numerous characteristics and advantages of various embodiments of the present technology have been set forth in the foregoing description, together with details of the structure and function of various embodiments of the technology, this detailed description is illustrative only, and changes may be made in detail, especially in matters of structure and arrangements of parts within the principles of the present technology to the full extent indicated by the broad general meaning of the terms in which the appended claims are expressed.

Claims

1. An apparatus comprising: an elongate housing defining a cavity, the cavity configured to receive a beacon and having an open mouth; a lid configured to selectively cover the open mouth, the lid extending from a first end to a second end and defining: a component configured to secure the lid over the open mouth; and a set screw, positioned within the lid and operable to apply a force to the

component.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 in which the component comprises a cross pin, wherein the cross pin is disposed through the first end of the lid.
3. The apparatus of claim 2 in which the cross pin is engaged with the set screw such that the set screw places the cross pin in tension.
4. The apparatus of claim 2 in which the cross pin is disposed within a through-hole in the housing.
5. The apparatus of claim 2 in which the set screw comprises a frustoconical end, wherein force is applied to the cross pin at the conical end.
6. The apparatus of claim 1 in which the component comprises a lip of the lid, wherein the lip is disposed at the second end of the lid.
7. The apparatus of claim 6 further comprising a cross pin disposed through the first end of the lid and the elongate housing.
8. The apparatus of claim 1 in which the set screw is movable between a first configuration, in which the component is placed in tension by the set screw, and a second configuration, in which the component is not placed in tension by the set screw.
9. The apparatus of claim 1 in which the lid defines a longitudinal axis extending from the first end to the second end, the lid comprising: a tab, situated at the first end, wherein the tab is traversed by a first bore extending in a first direction, wherein the first direction is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis; and a lip, situated at the second end, disposed within the cavity and contacting a peripheral edge of the open mouth.
10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the component is situated within the first bore, and wherein the set screw comprises a frustoconical end, the set screw configured to be inserted into the tab such that the frustoconical end contacts the component.
11. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the set screw is defined as a first set screw, and further comprising: a plurality of second set screws disposed about a periphery of the lid, wherein the plurality of second set screws are movable between a first position and a second position, and wherein: in the second position, the plurality of second set screws place the lid and the housing in tension.
12. The apparatus of claim 11 in which the plurality of second set screws are disposed in the lid and oriented perpendicular to the longitudinal axis and perpendicular to the first direction.
13. The apparatus of claim 11 in which the plurality of second set screws are disposed in the lid and oriented parallel to the first direction.
14. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the component is situated within the first bore, and wherein the first set screw comprises a frustoconical end, the set screw configured to be inserted into the tab such that the frustoconical end contacts the component.
15. A method of securing a beacon within the apparatus of claim 1, comprising: placing the beacon into the cavity of the elongate housing through the open mouth; positioning the lid over the open mouth; and tightening the set screw such that a force is applied to the component.
16. The method of claim 15 further comprising installing a cross pin through the housing and a bore formed within the first end of the lid, wherein the step of applying a force to the component comprises forcing an end of the set screw against the cross pin.
17. An apparatus comprising: an elongate housing defining a cavity configured to receive a beacon, wherein the cavity opens at an open mouth formed in the elongate housing; a lid configured to selectively cover the open mouth, the lid extending from a first end to a second end; a component configured to engage with the housing; and a means for applying force to the component, wherein the means for applying force to the component is carried by the lid.
18. The apparatus of claim 17 in which the component comprises a cross pin disposed through the first end of the lid and the housing.
19. The apparatus of claim 17 in which the component comprises a lip disposed under a periphery of the open mouth.

20. The apparatus of claim 17 in which the component is characterized as a first component, and further comprising: a second component configured to engage with the housing; wherein the first component is disposed at the first end of the lid and the second component is disposed at the second end of the lid; and wherein the means for applying force to the first component applies a force to the second component.

21. The apparatus of claim 20 in which the means for applying force to the first component comprises a plurality of set screws disposed through the lid.