

## **Appendix 2: Steps, Slopes, Boardwalks and Bridges**

### **2.1: Overview**

Steps don't occur in nature, and so will inevitably appear intrusive. For this reason they should only be used where there is no alternative. Usually this is when the only possible route for a path is so steep it is difficult to walk on and where the walkers' feet push the surface material down the slope. We also need to consider who is using the path: for instance, is it a mountain trail used by people prepared to be challenged, or is it a busy access path used by mainstream tourists wearing ordinary footwear?

Wooden steps can be appropriate in woodland areas. And if natural timber from the woodland can be used to make them, they blend in very well.

In places where the ground is soft and vulnerable to damage from footfall or water, box steps offer full protection and are a very good solution. They are also good in busy tourist destinations, protecting vegetation from the wear and tear of many feet. For the same reason they are ideal when used in combination with boardwalks.

In mountainous locations woodwork looks out of place and stone should be used. Height is gained by the use of stone pitching which, by being apparently random, looks natural. Also, it is more pleasing to the walker than conventional steps, as it gives an impression of using natural footholds.

The techniques for making box steps can be adapted for making small bridges and boardwalks, and a Guide for doing this is included in this section.