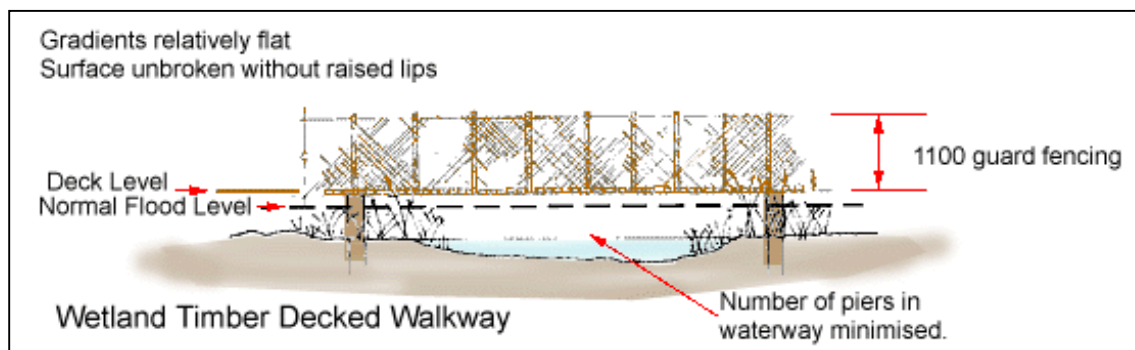


Wetland Timber Decked Paths

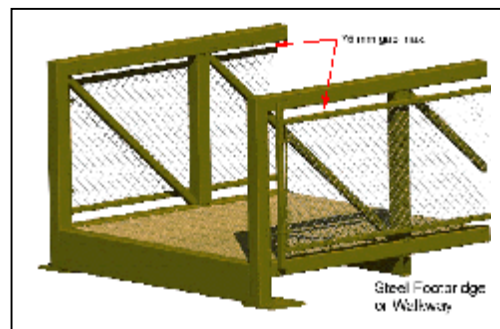
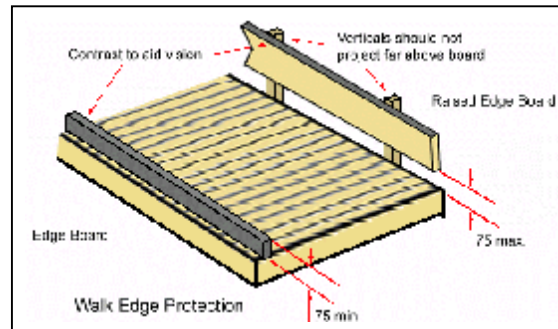
Country paths, tracks and bridleways should avoid wetlands when ever possible as surfaces are easily damaged. In general wetlands should not be disturbed. Where due to necessity a country path must cross a wetland the Countryside Commission, Forestry Commission or other responsible authority may have to be consulted. (see also our guide "Boardwalk Construction and Maintenance" for details)

- Habitats of protected species of animals, birds or plants may need special consideration and appropriate guidance should be sought.
- The hydrology (water flow) of the area must be protected, a times water levels may rise. Therefore sections or the full length of the pathway may be required to be raised clear of the surface.
- Walkways should be at least 1200 mm wide for one way traffic and 2000 mm for two way.
- The walkway should be raised clear of normal high water levels. In some sections a floating walk may be necessary. Walkway height should be minimised to reduce inclines at bridgeheads.
- A raised walkway should generally follow the same width rules as for country bridges.



- Wood slats should be placed as close together as possible while still allowing for drainage between them. Joints should be as level as possible (5 mm up or down max.). This enables people who use mobility aids, have low vision or ride wheelchairs to travel safely. If drainage gaps are used between planks the maximum gap should be 12 mm, 5 mm pref. to prevent child finger trapping.
- Planks should be perpendicular to the direction of travel to prevent walking sticks, bicycle tires and wheelchair wheels from becoming stuck in the openings.
- Decks should not be springy as this can cause loss of traction or tripping.
- Curves and angles should be very slight as they reduce traction especially when wet or muddy.

- The low level walkway should have defined edges. A 150 mm high tapping rail or raised 75 mm plus edge board which contrasts to the background.
- In some hazardous sections a 1100 mm high guardrail should be provided.
- Inclined joining and leaving sections should have handrails at 600 and 950 mm heights.
- Hand and guardrails should not provide the opportunity for children to climb up them (no horizontal rails) and should follow the 100 mm ball rule for gaps.
- On narrow decks 2000 mm wide passing places should be provided at appropriate intervals.
- Observation points should not obstruct the pathway width, level, wider possibly fenced sections should be provided.
- On long sections (over 70 metres) provision of seating set along the path should be considered.
- On longer pathways space for wheelchairs and scooters to turn should be provided every 50 metres. These should be level and 2500 mm wide and 2800 mm long.
- Where possible gradients should be 1:20 or less, rest places should be as per BT Country standards (see Country Pathways and Surfaces). Any sections of 1:20 or more should be provided with handrails.
- Consider providing alternate stepped routes for inclines greater than 1:20 as many people find ramps and slopes difficult to walk along.
- The path surface and rails should be inspected weekly and repaired promptly. An annual (pre-season) check should be made of all underside supports.
- Construction elements floor boards, posts, handrails, etc. should not pose trapping hazards. The 100 mm ball rule should be used on all fence elements. But managers need to remember that gaps between boards should not tend to trap children's fingers, a 5 mm gap permits drainage and will not trap small fingers.



While every effort is made to ensure that information held within this document is accurate and up to date, Croft Consultants will not be held responsible for any loss, damage, injury, or inconvenience caused by any inaccuracies contained herein.

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