



Five Benefits of Aluminum All-Terrain Staircases

Hewitt all-terrain stairway solutions are built to last in any environment.

BY MATT WATSON

Minnesota is famous as the land of 10,000 lakes, so it's no surprise that North America's leading manufacturer of boat docks and outdoor stairway solutions was founded in a small town just outside the Twin Cities. Established in 1971 when **Larry Hewitt** bought Bauer Welding Shop, Hewitt **Docks, Lifts & Pontoon Legs** is a family-owned business now on its second generation of management. "My father was a machinist by trade," says COO **Troy Hewitt**. "The marine industry wasn't his goal, but he was asked by a friend to build a dock with wheels and everything started to grow from there."

What began as a small operation has expanded into a 22-acre campus with nearly 400,000 square feet of facilities. Docks and boat lifts were the company's bread and butter, but Hewitt soon realized the need for a more durable and versatile way for people to access their lakefront. "We wanted to have a stair system that was going to last forever," says **Chris Shay**, Hewitt's sales manager. Especially in an aquatic setting, traditional wood stairs will rot and require consistent maintenance, and steel quickly rusts, he says. Thus, the aluminum all-terrain staircase was born. With the help of an in-house engineering team, the stairs have evolved over time and taken on an array of new applications. >



Environmentally Friendly

As a company focused on outdoor recreation, Hewitt wanted to be sure its products were conscious of the environment they inhabit. That was one of the considerations in creating the all-terrain stairs from aluminum. For starters, aluminum is among the most eco-friendly metals found on Earth. It's 100% recyclable and less energy-intensive to form than steel.

Yet the environmental benefits extend beyond the material itself. "It's also about minimizing any disturbance to the natural environment throughout the life of the product, and that includes installation," says **Andrew Olsen**, the company's marketing specialist. Olsen explains that the stairs work around their natural setting, rather than displacing greenery and other natural features.

Hewitt All-Terrain Staircases are the ideal solution for anyone looking to protect their overall project costs, for ease of installation and for durability. The sustainable solution combines strength and aesthetic appeal that truly is a step above the rest.

▲ Hewitt's all-terrain staircases make it easier to reach the top of any hillside and get to where you're going.

Built to Last

While aluminum isn't as heavy as steel or wood, it's just as durable and far easier to work with. Hewitt explains that creating extrusions in the aluminum—a process where the metal is pushed through a form mold to add shape and texture—increases its strength. "We can add strength in certain areas with extrusions, making the aluminum more robust yet still lightweight," he says. Hewitt adds that aluminum doesn't rust or rot, and the aluminum oxide that results from its natural aging process actually strengthens the material further. It truly is a no-maintenance solution.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HEWITT DOCKS, LIFTS & PONTOON LEGS

Diverse Design Options

With 13 color choices and an abundance of add-on features, Hewitt's all-terrain stairs aren't just functional—they're designed to look good in any setting. "We add a two-tone powder coating in different colors, and the earthy tones blend perfectly with the natural surroundings," Shay says. Hewitt also offers ThruFlow decking for the treads, which contains small slots that let light and water flow through and allow vegetation to grow around the system. The sleek, minimalist design is ideal for a contemporary look that works just as well at the lake as it does in a residential setting. "All of our stairs are customized to match the terrain and slope of the application, yet lead times are minimal. Solid-sided, non-adjustable options are also available, and stairs can be anywhere from three- to five-feet wide," Shay says.

▼ ThruFlow decking lets light and water flow through the stairs and allows vegetation to grow around the system.



Simple Installation

Compared to other outdoor stairway solutions, Hewitt's all-terrain staircases are a breeze to install. "You could easily put them together yourself in a single sunny afternoon," Shay says. In fact, nearly half of Hewitt's customers install the stairs themselves. The company even created a series of instructional YouTube videos to complement the written assembly directions.

Since aluminum is far lighter than other comparable materials, especially steel, Hewitt says the installation process is about one-third less labor intensive than other solutions. This means that customers who choose to have a contractor complete the installation will save a substantial amount of money. In most installations, there's also no need for a permit, since the metal poles that hold the stairs in place simply need to be driven into the ground without the use of a concrete base.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HEWITT DOCKS, LIFTS & PONTOON LEGS



Versatile for All Terrains

As the name implies, Hewitt's all-terrain stairways are an ideal solution for any terrain or use case. "The most difficult thing people experience when looking for an outdoor stair solution is that the terrain itself is never going to be perfect. Concrete footings are going to be difficult to pour on a hillside, cement blocks will never stay in place, and it's challenging to put stairs along any hillside," Shay says. Because the stairs don't require concrete foundations and are highly adjustable, it's much easier to find the path of least resistance along a hill.

And while the all-terrain stairs are commonly used in rural, lakeside settings, there's a growing demand for urban applications as well. "If you have a living quarters above a garage, or a second story on an apartment building or commercial complex, the all-terrain stairs are a more flexible and cost-effective solution than steel or wood stairs," Shay says.

▲ Hewitt's all-terrain staircases save time and money, as installation is simple enough to complete on your own if desired.