

NAUTICAL MANILA "SPEED ROPES"

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The owners at the end of our private gravel road are seasonal residents who frequently rent their two houses to people, families, coming to the seashore of Southern Maine for vacation. These renters are mostly nice people but tend to drive too fast past the homes of the other nine residents. We were introduced to the use of nautical manila rope for speed control by a friend from another shore front community about ten years ago.

Nautical manila speed ropes are made with stock that is 1 ½ inches in diameter and may be purchased on the internet in the 50-foot lengths. You will also need to purchase 20 feet of ¼ inch cord of similar material to bind the folded segments at each end. We have found that natural manila rope tends to flatten and fray in a few years; thus we have gone to a synthetic material:

<https://sgtknots.com/collections/rope/products/promanila-twisted-polypropylene-tan-rope?variant=33464447434838>

Our gravel road is about 16 feet wide and a 12-foot speed rope works well. For this, we need to start with a 40-foot length of 1 ½ inch rope. You may wish to adjust length to meet your needs. A 40-foot piece is cut off. The ends are then taped with black heavy-duty duct tape and folded in two resulting in a 20-foot double strand. Then, the doubled ends are folded toward the center creating two four-foot segments with four strands each at the ends of the finished 12-foot speed rope. The four-stranded segments at each end are bound with two 10-foot pieces of ¼ inch synthetic cord. Synthetic rope is more slippery than natural manila. The cord is looped around a strand of the main rope at the end ties of each bundle to keep the binding in a stable position. (See photos below) The price of the synthetic rope and binder cord is about \$122.

These nautical manila speed ropes are fun to make and can add an attractive twist to speed control. By most accounts these ropes help supplement road signage to slow down traffic in our neighborhood.



One of three speed control ropes in three-season use on this 900-foot private way for at least 10 years to general acclaim.



End bundle of a new synthetic speed rope. Note the loop in the cord at the end tie on the far right.