

# Mono County Community Development Department

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## Planning Division

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(760) 932-5420, fax 932-5431  
[www.monocounty.ca.gov](http://www.monocounty.ca.gov)

## PREAPPLICATION REVIEW REQUEST

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**PROJECT NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ANTICIPATED PERMIT OR APPLICATION:**

- General Plan Amendment    Specific Plan    Conditional Use Permit    Director Review
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**REPRESENTATIVE** \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ ASSESSOR PARCEL # \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW REQUEST:** A preapplication review by the Mono County Land Development Technical Advisory Committee (LDTAC) is requested for the following project. Briefly describe below the type of project, units, square footage, etc. Please attach expanded narrative if available.

**PLEASE PROVIDE:** Maps, drawings, illustrations and narrative that may be useful for staff review.

## Preapplication Review Request for Mono County

**Project: Milky Way Meadows**  
**Assessor Parcel #: 024260005000**  
**Owners: Katharine Allen and Tony Phillips**  
**Submitted: 2/25/22**

Documents submitted:

- Preapplication
- Planning Map
- Geodesic Dome Specifications

Upon request:

- Animal and plant surveys conducted between 2005 and 2008

### **INTRODUCTION:**

We purchased Watterson Meadows (parcel 024260005000) in June 2021. This is a 273-acre piece of land located at the eastern end of Benton Crossing Road. It is surrounded on all sides by Forest Service land, is off-grid and has primarily been used for cattle grazing for the past 100+ years.

Since our purchase, cattle grazing on the property has been stopped, and we are now allowing the Meadows to revert to their natural untrampled state. Surveys are underway to monitor the possible reappearance of native species, both flora and fauna.

The pristine beauty of the land, which we have renamed "Milky Way Meadows," is key to our plans. Not only do we wish to live on the property in one personal residence, but also hope to develop an environmentally-friendly tourism business.

Pending approvals, our development work would begin in 2022 with a simple dark-sky astronomy campground. The site has some of the darkest skies in North America with unparalleled views of the Milky Way and other night sky wonders. Campers would receive weekend astronomy lectures from Tony Phillips, a professional astronomer, and astrophotography tutorials from local nature photographers. Over time we would like to expand, providing off-grid facilities for events such as weddings, yoga retreats, and photography workshops.

The Meadows provides a unique opportunity to offer destination dark sky center that locals and visitors can enjoy. In addition, we are hopeful we can help ease some of the growing demand in Mono County for dispersed camping.

Everything we develop will prioritize the protection of the unique habitats on the property. We are in the process of researching how to create the necessary off-grid infrastructure we will need. In addition, we are already working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and

other qualified professionals to conduct vegetation management with monitoring to ultimately establish practices that will help plant and animal species to recover and thrive.

In this preapplication, we have provided a general description of our proposed development with supporting documents. We are committed to working with the County and all relevant agencies to understand how to move forward with our plans in compliance with County regulations and zoning requirements.

*We are asking for feedback from Mono County to understand which permits are needed for our short-term planned activities and guidance for how to develop our project in compliance with county regulations.*

### **CURRENT PROPERTY CONDITION**

Milky Way Meadows (formerly Watterson Meadows) is an undeveloped piece of land surrounded by Forest Service public land in eastern Mono County. The terrain is considerably varied, with springs and meadows, areas of sage, rabbit brush and willow, volcanic rock and variations in elevation. There are several dirt roads that permit access to the property and one circular road that skirts the edge of the main meadow area.

The environment has been significantly impacted by decades of grazing. This practice was ended in 2021. Until our purchase, there is no indication that any efforts have been made to protect the springs and other areas of interest on the property. Following recommended best practice, we are currently allowing the meadows and other areas to rest as we gather information for how to best care for the property.

### **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2022-2023**

For this review, we are providing our proposed plan for 2022-2023 and our long-term goals. For the near-term, we want to start building our dark-sky astronomy business called Milky Way Meadows. You can see our preliminary website here: <https://www.milkywaymeadows.com/>.

For this section, refer Map 2: Proposed Development 2022-2023.

We plan to hold several events during the 2022-2023 spring and summer seasons to learn which approaches will work best. To accomplish this, we plan to:

- Pilot weekend events targeting local residents and visitors to the Eastern Sierra.
- Provide limited tent / van camping.
- Offer dark sky astronomy lectures and star viewing through telescopes.
- Run astrophotography tours.

To carry out these events on the property we propose to:

- Develop 6-10 temporary tent camping sites with easily removable materials such as railroad ties. There are two proposed sites for camping. One along an elevated area close to the southern entrance and one in the edge of an area with pinyon pine trees (see map).

- Install a 20-foot (diameter) geodesic dome that will serve as a base structure for welcoming guests and staging events. The dome can be put up and pulled down in several hours and is not a permanent structure. (See attached specifications for the dome.)
- Provide two porta-potties for waste with hand-washing capability.
- Import water in a water truck/tank.
- Provide several solar-powered generators for limited power.
- Create a small parking area.
- Maintain current roads to reduce fire danger (trim bushes, clear grass, etc.)

Concurrently, to protect the special environmental resources on the property, we will:

- Work with qualified professionals and with agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as all relevant Mono County agencies, to ensure we protect the special environmental resources on the property
- Develop a comprehensive map that captures information provided by past reports and resources that have studied the property. This baseline information will help us plan our future project.
- Set up vegetation and species monitoring (already underway).

### **LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

In the longer term (5–10-year range), we hope to establish our permanent residence on the property, and at the same time grow our business into a premier destination for visitors to the Eastern Sierra.

In general terms, (pending appropriate County review and approval, and consultation with all appropriate building and development professionals), our vision is to:

Build / install the following structures:

- Personal residence (site location TBD)
- Retreat Center / Dark Sky Education Center (using geodesic domes, which can be converted to permanent structures)
- 1-2 small star observatories
- Several geodesic domes to provide a glamping experience for visitors and/or several small rental cabins
- 1-2 permanent tent /van campgrounds
- Limited expansion of roads to planned residence

Install the following off-grid infrastructure:

- Electricity - solar panels/batteries
- Water - solar well
- Septic: composting toilets

Establish environmental enhancement practices:

- Create long-term processes to support the healthy maintenance of the meadows and other plant and animal species
- Replace barbed-wire fences with wildlife-friendly fencing

- Conduct ongoing vegetation and species monitoring
- Establish ongoing collaboration with government agencies providing wildlife and land resource protection
- Provide public environmental education

Over time grow tourist-based services that may include:

- Camping /
- Photography tours
- STEM-based workshops and programs

Finally, we are aware that several millennial Native American camping sites have been identified along the volcanic outcrop that overlooks the meadows on the east side of the property. None of our proposed developments impacts those sites and it is our intention to focus visitor activity on other parts of the property.

## CONCLUSION

When we met with members of the County Planning Department prior to submitting this Preapplication Review Request, we were advised to give the County the general outlines of the full development vision we have for this property. This we have tried to do with in this document, supported by the attachments. We understand the over time this vision will evolve to fit County and business requirements. Time and circumstance will ultimately guide us, especially in terms of how the business will grow and develop.

We thank you for reviewing our Preapplication and look forward to receiving your feedback and guidance.

Kind regard,

  
Katharine Allen and Tony Phillips

Phone: 760-920-5259

Email: sierraskyit@gmail.com

# MILKY WAY MEADOWS

# Milky Way Meadows Planned Development

<https://milkywaymeadows.com/>  
 Owners: Katharine Allen and Tony Phillips  
 Assessor Parcel #: 024260005000

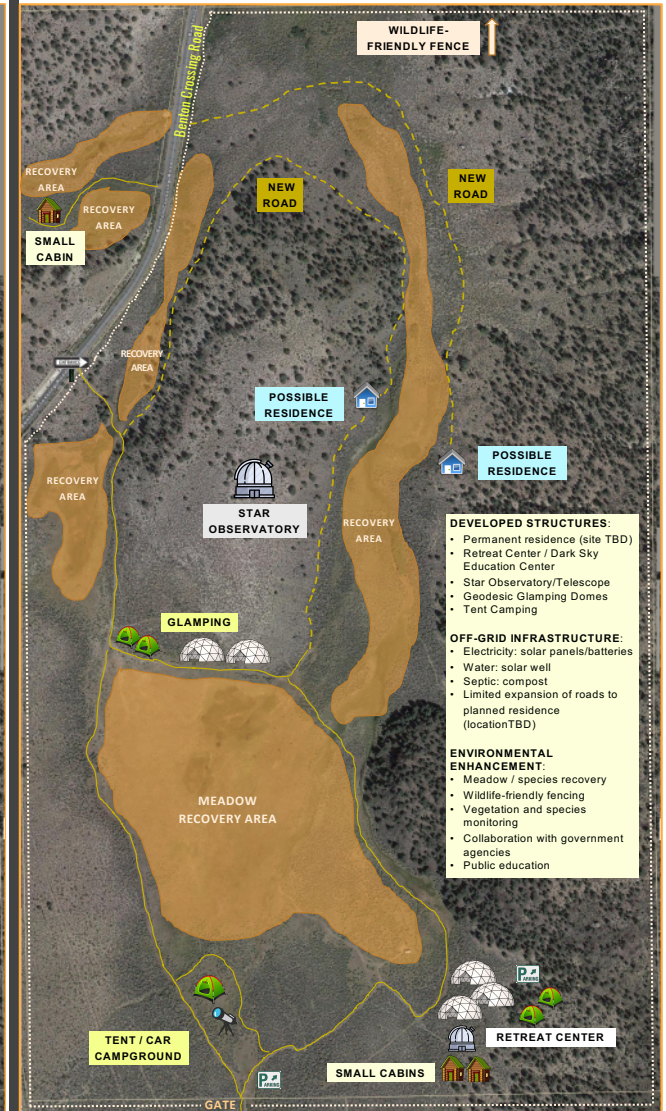
## MAP 1: Current Conditions



## MAP 2: Proposed Development in 2022-23



## MAP 3: Long-Term Development





**DWELLDOMES**  
**PACIFIC DOMES™**

# 20 Foot Dome

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**Floor Area**

300 ft<sup>2</sup>

**Ceiling Height**

12 ft

**Bay Window**

7 ft tall x 16 ft wide

**Dome Weight**

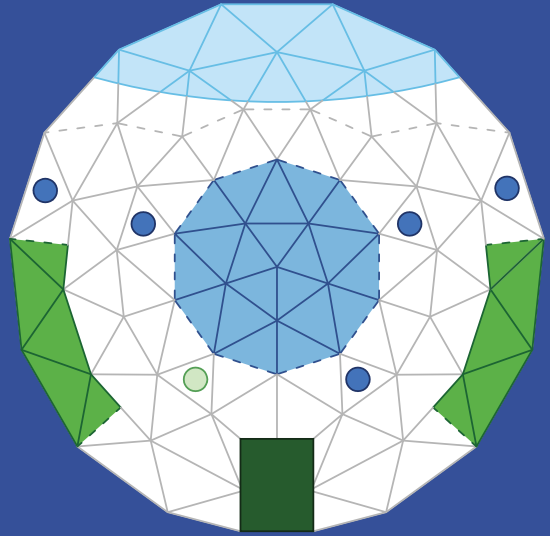
895 lbs.

**6 round Windows**

2 ft diameter

**Assembly Time**

4 to 10 hours with a crew of 3 or 4



# 24 Foot Dome

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**Floor Area**

426 ft<sup>2</sup>

**Ceiling Height**

14.25 ft

**Bay Window**

8½ ft tall x 20 ft wide

**Dome Weight**

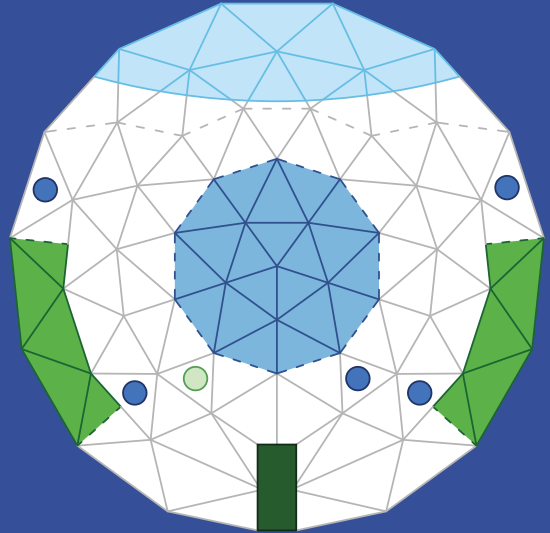
1,124 lbs.




**6 Round Windows**




2 ft diameter

**Assembly Time**

4 to 12 hours with a crew of 3 or 4



-  **Bay Window** (optional zip-off)
-  **Zip-Off Roof** (optional)
-  **Windows** (optional screens)

-  **Door Frame** (optional diamond door)
-  **Base Roll-Up** (optional base screen)
-  **Stove Vent or Solar Fan** (optional)





# Why Geodesic Domes?

Domes are nature's own geometry and provide a unique environment for every use. Since 1980, Pacific Domes has perfected the function and beauty of portable Geodesic Domes. We combine the sacred geometry developed by R. Buckminster Fuller with our progressively designed covers to bring you this futuristic structure.



**Energy Efficient**



**Easy to Assemble**



**Portable**



**Structurally Sound**



**Holds Heavy Snow Loads**



**Handles High Winds**

Date: 2011-05-05



**Precision  
Structural  
Engineering, Inc.**

**NOTE: 1.163" Pipe Diameter No Longer Offered**

**Maximum Snow Load, Wind Exposure C**

Dome Diameter	Pipe Diameter	Pipe Gage	Wind Speed	Roof Snow (psf)	Remarks
16'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
16'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	25	
16'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	35	
16'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	65	
16'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	85	
20'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
20'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	25	
20'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	40	
20'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	65	
20'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	85	
24'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
24'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
24'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	20	
24'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	40	
24'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	50	
30'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
30'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
30'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	20	
30'	1.66" O.D.	17	100 mph	40	
30'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	50	
36'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
36'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
36'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	15	
36'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	35	
36'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	50	
44'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
44'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
44'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
44'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	30	
44'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	45	
60'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph		This pipe diameter cannot be used.
120'	2.875" O.D.	10 (0.134")	100 mph	15	
120'	3.500" O.D.	12 (0.097")	100 mph	20	
120'	3.500" O.D.	11 (0.120")	100 mph	25	
120'	4.00" O.D.	12 (0.097")	100 mph	25	
120'	4.00" O.D.	11 (0.120")	100 mph	25	

- Dead Load of 1 psf has been applied on the horizontal projection.
- Fabric covering must not deflect greater than 1/2" between struts due to applied loads.
- Wind pressure for this table is using an exposure category C per ASCE 7-05

Exposure B: shall apply where the ground surface roughness as described as, urban and suburban areas, wooded areas or other terrain with numerous closely spaced obstructions having the size of single-family dwellings or larger, prevail in the upwind direction for a distance of at least 2630 ft. or 10 times the height of the building, whichever is greater.

Exposure C: shall apply for all cases where exposures B or D do not apply.

Exposure D: shall apply where the ground surface roughness as described as, flat, unobstructed areas and water surfaces outside hurricane-prone regions. This category includes smooth mud flats, salt flats and unbroken ice, prevails in the upwind direction for a distance at least 5000 ft. or 10 times the building height, whichever is greater. Exposure D shall extend inland from the shoreline for distance of 660 ft. or 10 times the height of the building, whichever is greater.

- The above loads are estimates only and should not be used for any specific project without prior consultation with Precision Structural Engineering, Inc., Tel. 541-850-6300, www.structure1.com
- Domes must have foundation to restrain the bottom joints of the dome.
- The code used in forming this table is the International Building Code, IBC 2009

**Maximum Accessory Loading for Temporary Structures, Wind Exposure C**

Dome Diameter	Pipe Diameter	Pipe Gage	Wind Speed	Dead Load (per node)	Remarks
16'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
16'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	200 lb. @ 5 nodes	
16'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	800 lb. @ 5 nodes	
16'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	2000 lb. @ 5 nodes	
16'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	3000 lb. @ 5 nodes	
20'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
20'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	400 lb. @ 5 nodes	
20'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	800 lb. @ 5 nodes	
20'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	2000 lb. @ 5 nodes	
20'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	3000 lb. @ 5 nodes	
24'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
24'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
24'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	500 lb. @ 10 nodes	
24'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	1000 lb. @ 10 nodes	
24'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	2000 lb. @ 10 nodes	
30'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
30'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
30'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	300 lb. @ 10 nodes	
30'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	1000 lb. @ 10 nodes	
30'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	1500 lb. @ 10 nodes	
36'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
36'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
36'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	200 lb. @ 10 nodes	
36'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	750 lb. @ 10 nodes	
36'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	1250 lb. @ 10 nodes	
44'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
44'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
44'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	150 lb. @ 15 nodes	
44'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	500 lb. @ 15 nodes	
44'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	800 lb. @ 15 nodes	
60'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	500 lb. @ 15 nodes	

- ~ Additional Dead Loads shall be applied at joint/member intersections only.
- ~ For additional dead loads shown on this table, contractor/user shall submit details of attaching the load to the Engineer of Record for approval/disapproval before attaching any load to the dome/structure.
- ~ Roof Live Load of 12 psf has been applied on the horizontal projection.
- ~ Stress increase factor of 1.33 has been applied for load combinations including wind loads.
- ~ Fabric covering must not deflect greater than 1/2" between struts due to applied loads.
- ~ Wind pressure for this table is using an exposure category C per ASCE 7-02

Exposure B: shall apply where the ground surface roughness as described as, urban and suburban areas, wooded areas or other terrain with numerous closely spaced obstructions having the size of single-family dwellings or larger, prevail in the upwind direction for a distance of at least 2630 ft. or 10 times the height of the building, whichever is greater.

Exposure C: shall apply for all cases where exposures B or D do not apply.

Exposure D: shall apply where the ground surface roughness as described as, flat, unobstructed areas and water surfaces outside hurricane-prone regions. This category includes smooth mud flats, salt flats and unbroken ice, prevails in the upwind direction for a distance at least 5000 ft. or 10 times the building height, whichever is greater. Exposure D shall extend inland from the shoreline for distance of 660 ft. or 10 times the height of the building, whichever is greater.

- ~ Contact the Engineer of Record for foundation and additional information before using the above table and/or before construction.
- ~ The code used in forming this table is the International Building Code, IBC 2003
- ~ Temporary structures are to be permitted for no more than 180 days per IBC 107.1

Maximum Accessory Loading for Temporary Structures, Wind Exposure B

Dome Diameter	Pipe Diameter	Pipe Gage	Wind Speed	Dead Load (per node)	Remarks
16'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
16'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	200 lb. @ 5 nodes	
16'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	800 lb. @ 5 nodes	
16'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	2000 lb. @ 5 nodes	
16'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	3000 lb. @ 5 nodes	
20'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
20'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	400 lb. @ 5 nodes	
20'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	800 lb. @ 5 nodes	
20'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	2000 lb. @ 5 nodes	
20'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	3000 lb. @ 5 nodes	
24'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
24'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	10 lb. @ 10 nodes	
24'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	500 lb. @ 10 nodes	
24'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	1000 lb. @ 10 nodes	
24'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	2000 lb. @ 10 nodes	
30'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
30'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	25 lb. @ 10 nodes	
30'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	300 lb. @ 10 nodes	
30'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	1000 lb. @ 10 nodes	
30'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	1500 lb. @ 10 nodes	
36'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
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36'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	200 lb. @ 10 nodes	
36'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	750 lb. @ 10 nodes	
36'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	1250 lb. @ 10 nodes	
44'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
44'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
44'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	150 lb. @ 15 nodes	
44'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	500 lb. @ 15 nodes	
44'	1.9" O.D.	16	100 mph	800 lb. @ 15 nodes	
60'	0.922" O.D.	18	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.163" O.D.	17	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.315" O.D.	16	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.66" O.D.	16	100 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
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- ~ Additional Dead Loads shall be applied at joint/member intersections only.
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- ~ Wind pressure for this table is using an exposure category B per ASCE 7-02

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**Maximum Accessory Loading for Temporary Structures, Wind Exposure C**

Dome Diameter	Pipe Diameter	Pipe Gage	Wind Speed	Dead Load (per node)	Remarks
16'	0.922" O.D.	18	85 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
16'	1.163" O.D.	17	85 mph	200 lb. @ 5 nodes	
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30'	1.66" O.D.	16	85 mph	1000 lb. @ 10 nodes	
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36'	1.315" O.D.	16	85 mph	200 lb. @ 10 nodes	
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36'	1.9" O.D.	16	85 mph	1250 lb. @ 10 nodes	
44'	0.922" O.D.	18	85 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
44'	1.163" O.D.	17	85 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
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60'	1.315" O.D.	16	85 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.66" O.D.	16	85 mph	None	This pipe diameter cannot be used.
60'	1.9" O.D.	16	85 mph	500 lb. @ 15 nodes	

- ~ Additional Dead Loads shall be applied at joint/member intersections only.
- ~ For additional dead loads shown on this table, contractor/user shall submit details of attaching the load to the Engineer of Record for approval/disapproval before attaching any load to the dome/structure.
- ~ Roof Live Load of 12 psf has been applied on the horizontal projection.
- ~ Stress increase factor of 1.33 has been applied for load combinations including wind loads.
- ~ Fabric covering must not deflect greater than 1/2" between struts due to applied loads.
- ~ Wind pressure for this table is using an exposure category C per ASCE 7-02

Exposure B: shall apply where the ground surface roughness as described as, urban and suburban areas, wooded areas or other terrain with numerous closely spaced obstructions having the size of single-family dwellings or larger, prevail in the upwind direction for a distance of at least 2630 ft. or 10 times the height of the building, whichever is greater.

Exposure C: shall apply for all cases where exposures B or D do not apply.

Exposure D: shall apply where the ground surface roughness as described as, flat, unobstructed areas and water surfaces outside hurricane-prone regions. This category includes smooth mud flats, salt flats and unbroken ice, prevails in the upwind direction for a distance at least 5000 ft. or 10 times the building height, whichever is greater. Exposure D shall extend inland from the shoreline for distance of 660 ft. or 10 times the height of the building, whichever is greater.

- ~ Contact the Engineer of Record for foundation and additional information before using the above table and/or before construction.
- ~ The code used in forming this table is the International Building Code, IBC 2003
- ~ Temporary structures are to be permitted for no more than 180 days per IBC 107.1

