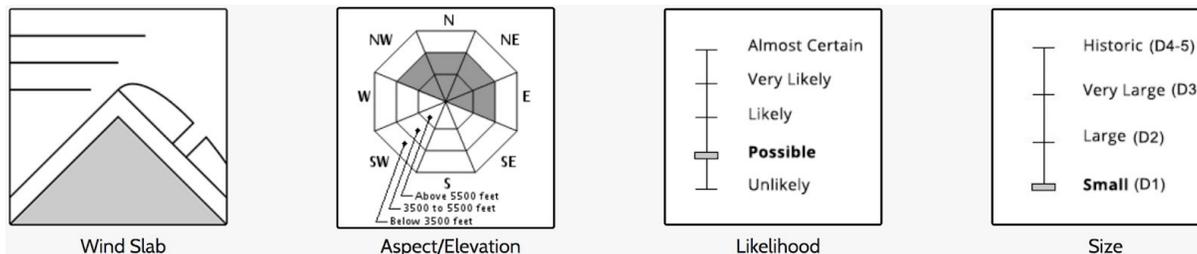


The Bottom Line

A stout ice crust exists on terrain where recent snow has been scoured away. This ice crust is impenetrable to booting or microspikes in most places and creates a slide-for-life situation, even on lower angle slopes. Wind slabs linger on north facing aspects today and should be assessed carefully. A small avalanche could be a big problem given the icy bed surface. Avalanche danger will rise to MODERATE today with new snow and rain showers creating the potential for human triggered avalanches.

Avalanche Problem



Wind slabs on shady aspects remained cold and dry yesterday but were on the reactive side of stubborn in sheltered areas. Slabs in more exposed terrain were denser and unreactive with the sun and last nights refreeze helping to settle them. New snow or rain may stress slabs on certain aspects and terrain features. Though not enough rain is expected to create a wet snow avalanche problem, the rain could impact the weak interface beneath existing slabs. The faceting occurring beneath the ice crust is a wild card unlikely to affect avalanche size or potential in most common paths but is worth considering in obscure wind sheltered areas with infrequent avalanche activity.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday, clear skies and low wind speeds allowed south facing slopes to warm despite high temperatures in the teens on the summit. Today, low pressure to our south will bring some snow showers to the summits with rain showers at lower elevations. Wind will be from the south from 20-35 mph with a trace to 2" snow possible. At 5:30 am it is 33F at Pinkham Notch, and 16F on the summit where it is expected to reach into the upper 20's F later. Tomorrow, expect a washout with up to a half inch of rain all the way to the summit. Temperatures will drop significantly after the rain event and bring slide-for-life conditions back for the weekend.

Forecast Discussion

A stranded individual yesterday created a learning opportunity about the value of the proper equipment and research for any hike or climb in the range. The ice crust in wind exposed areas is bullet hard and without crampons, an ice axe, and solid experience or training to use them properly, you could be risking a long sliding fall that could lead to injury or death.

The Lion Head Winter Route remains the easiest route to the summit from Pinkham Notch but requires an ice axe, crampons (not just micro-spikes) and possibly a rope. This is a mountaineering route and requires solid skills for a safe, timely ascent.

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Please Remember: Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This forecast is just one of many decision making tools. You control your own risk by choosing where, when, and how you travel. Understand that the avalanche danger may change when actual weather differs from the weather forecast. For more information contact the Forest Service Snow Rangers, the AMC at the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center, or the caretakers at Hermit Lake Shelters.