Ranking

Prairie Island-Columbia	**2**
Salem-North Madison	**3**
Byron-North Madison	**4**

Summary

Construction of any of the three proposed routes, Prairie Island-Columbia, Salem-North Madison and Byron-North Madison has the potential to impact the environment.

Each proposed route study area has the potential to impact public lands, with the Prairie Island-Columbia route possibly impacting two major federal wildlife refuges, the Upper Mississippi and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuges. Other potential land impacts may occur on tribal land in the Prairie Island-Columbia study area, and in a number of State Natural Areas on all three proposed lines.

A potential major impact of the Prairie Island–Columbia route involves the need to cross two major rivers, the Wisconsin and the Mississippi. Both rivers include adjacent, contiguous wetlands at proposed crossing points that may bring about deleterious impacts during construction. Similarly, the Salem-North Madison route would require crossing the Mississippi River and may also require crossing, or building adjacent to, the Wisconsin River in areas where wetlands are present. The Byron-North Madison line doesn't necessitate a major river crossing, and wetlands along this route are smaller and more scattered.

All three routes could impact exceptional/outstanding resource waterways, however the Byron-North Madison route has the largest number of these designated waterways. The Salem-North Madison route has a fair number of exceptional/outstanding resource waterways, with the Prairie Island-Columbia route having the fewest number.

The Prairie Island-Columbia and Salem-North Madison lines transverse lands with great topographic relief. Both of these routes include areas of heavy forest cover, and could have major impacts on forested land. The Byron to North Madison route is predominantly agricultural land, and would impact forested land less frequently.

The Cultural Map of Wisconsin identifies numerous cultural resources in the three study areas. The probability of encountering threatened, endangered and rare species is high along all of the routes.