

Utility Poles of Southeast Louisiana

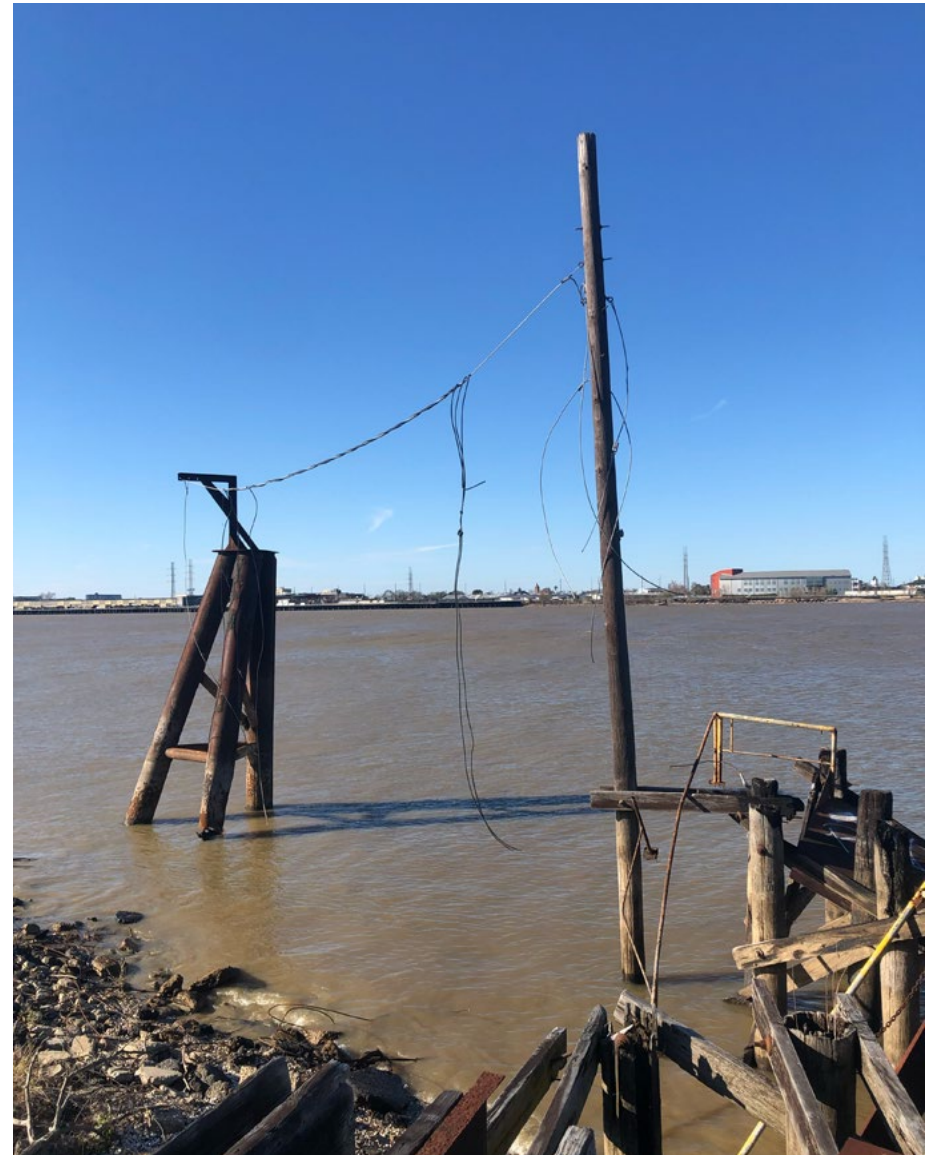
Jen Liu



Utility poles often fade into the background. They are a ubiquitous part of our modern landscape, tethering the wires that bring us the services that turn the lights on and keep us connected. The “utility” in utility pole primarily references its role in facilitating services like electricity and communications. What might be their other utilities?

Once I started noticing them, I couldn't stop. In ridealongs with lineworkers down in the bayou and daily walks around New Orleans, I learned how seeing them is a way of seeing how infrastructures become embedded in environments. These poles can tell us about the places we live and how we live in those places. In southeast Louisiana, this is a place shaped by multiple relations to water - from the ever changing rivers, bayous, and the coastline, to increasing storms, floods, and land loss. These poles bring service to residents at the tip of the coast and to oil and gas facilities that line the river. Utility poles are part of this broader array of infrastructures that makes this region both habitable and vulnerable.

Imagining futures in coastal Louisiana requires disentangling and re-imagining our relations to infrastructures. Where will the utility pole be in these futures?



Pole in the Mississippi River
Algiers, New Orleans



Leaning pole on the levee
Algiers, New Orleans



Overgrown pole
St. Bernard Avenue, New Orleans



View from a Pier
Island Road, Terrebonne Parish



Old pole
Alexander Street, New Orleans



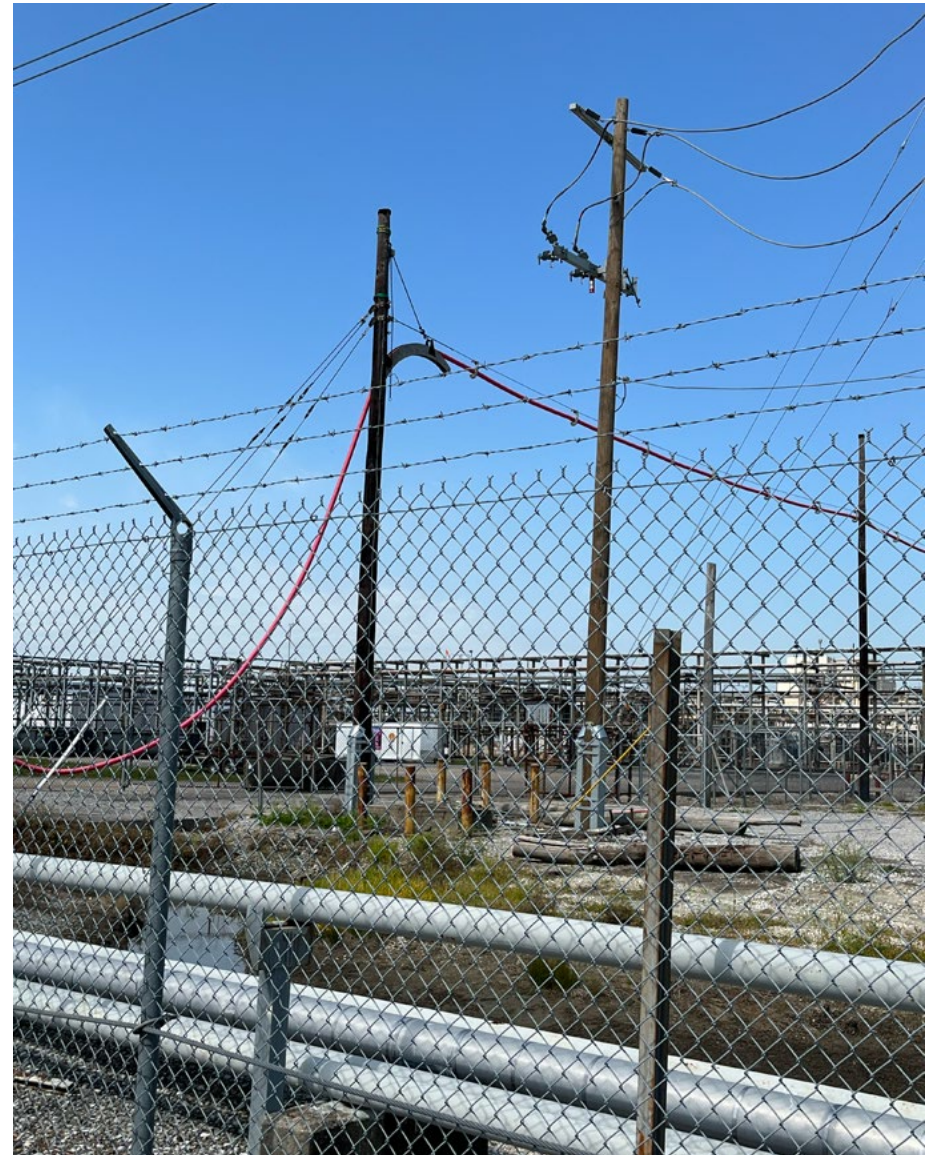
Pole being replaced after tornado
Arabi, St. Bernard Parish



Poles along LA-23,
Venice, Plaquemines Parish



Pole in front of Shell refinery plant
Norco, St. Charles Parish



Poles in Shell chemical plant
Norco, St. Charles Parish



Extra poles stored at a shipyard
Amelia, Terrebonne Parish



Pole repair
Island Road, Terrebonne Parish



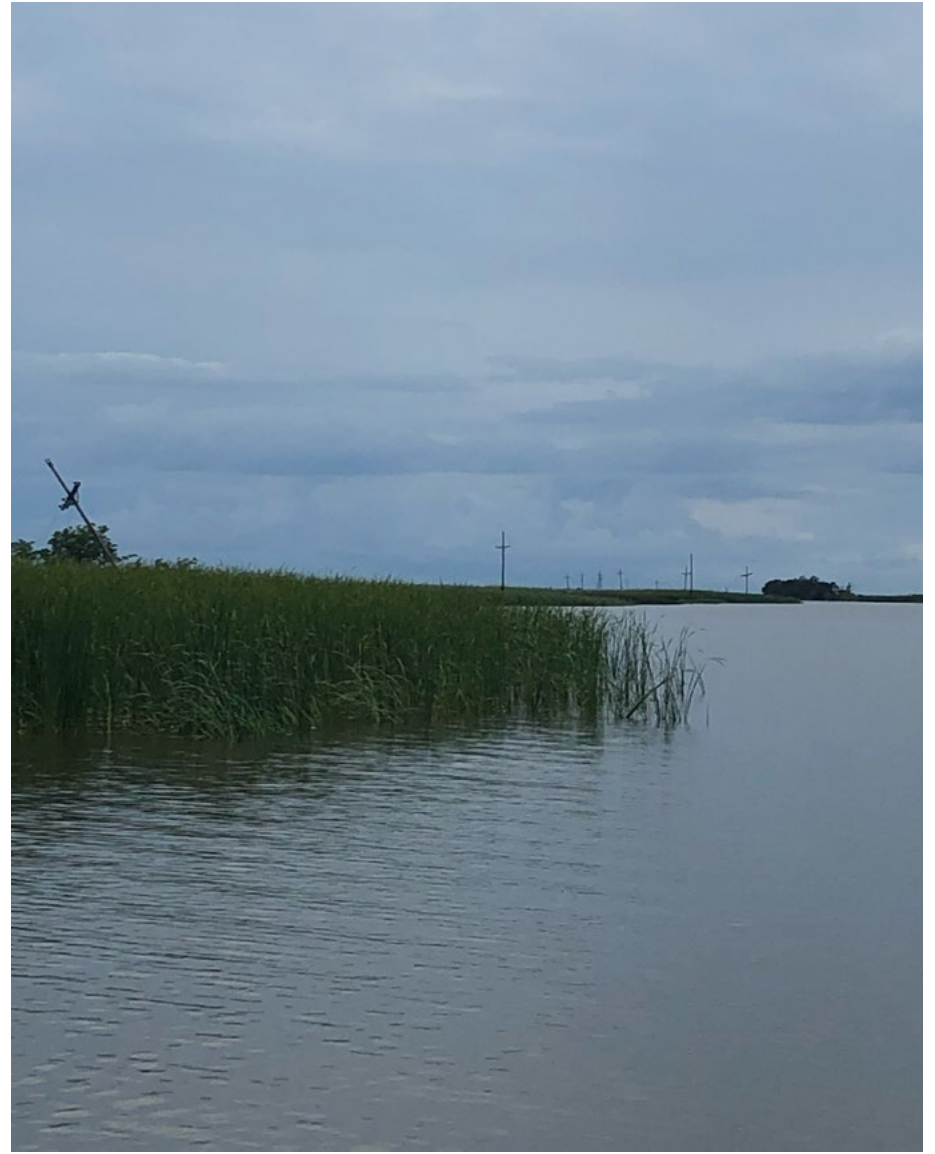
Lashed pole
Amelia, Terrebonne Parish



New poles and old poles
Dulac, Terrebonne Parish



Very tall pole over a canal
Montegut, Terrebonne Parish



Downed poles to a fishing camp
Bayou Dularge, Terrebonne Parish



Poles at the end of Island Road
Isle de Jean Charles, Terrebonne Parish



Bald eagle on a pole
Bayou Cane, Terrebonne Parish



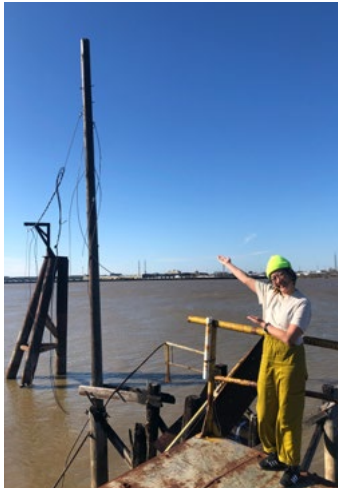
Pole beyond the levee
Algiers Point, New Orleans



Pole with street light covered in Cat's claw
Miro Street, New Orleans



Pole with light,
Urquhart Street, New Orleans



Thank you for looking!

Jen Liu
jenliujenliu.com

2023
Bvlbancha|New Orleans, LA