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River Vigil pB1 By Dubois Is Ended

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MODESTO — Protester Mark Dubois reportedly left his rocky perch at New Melones reservoir Sunday and went into seclusion, possibly suffering from a broken toe and a swollen leg.

The news of Dubois' apparent pull-out was relayed to the press by Col. Donald O'Shei, district engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who in turn received word from Rich Hammond, deputy director of the state Resources Agency.

"He (Dubois) said he was planning to lay low, rest up and emerge on Tuesday," O'Shei said.

The report could not be confirmed Sunday night. It was unknown whether five protesters chained to rocks at Parrott's Ferry bridge along the river knew of Dubois' apparent decision to abandon his 6-day-old vigil.

Dubois, 30, executive director of Friends of the River, vanished May 21, leaving word that he had hidden himself on the shoreline of the rising reservoir. Reporters later were led to his lair and confirmed he was chained to a rock.

Dubois, of Sacramento, said his goal was to keep New Melones Reservoir from filling above Parrott's Ferry bridge, the traditional end of the famous Stanislaus River white water rapids raft ride.

New Melones, when entirely full, would drown out the entire raft run and the scenic river canyons.

His presence in the canyon forced O'Shei to halt filling of the lake at elevation 803.5 feet above sea level.

Couriers, including Don Briggs, a Berkeley photographer, visited the protester Sunday. Reports from the Parrott's Ferry area Sunday night said Dubois had a broken toe and his left leg was swelling.

Dubois lived on fruit and nuts, having abandoned plans to fast during his vigil because the cold had sapped his energy. He spent his time writing letters and listening for search parties, which he avoided by ducking into a small cave, his associates said.

His foot was about 18 inches above the water level Friday.