

Game director Sommerville fired

Ron Sommerville, the Game Department director who led a revolt of Fish and Game biologists to campaign in favor of repealing the state subsistence law, last week was fired from his job as Game Department Director.

Sommerville, a 19-year employee of the state, will be re-assigned to work for the U. S.

Forest Service under an inter-governmental personnel act agreement between the two. The reassignment will allow Sommerville to complete the time he needs to build total retirement benefits.

Sommerville was relieved of his duties by Fish and Game Department Commissioner Ron Skoog who stated in his termi-

nation letter that he felt that Sommerville had "burned too many bridges and alienated too many people. It is time to mend those bridges, to ameliorate the criticism that have been expressed by members of the public and our professional colleagues, and to re-establish the good personal relations and cooperative (Cont. on Page Twenty-Four)

Sommerville transferred from Game

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attitudes that I believe have suffered from the controversy.

"I believe your remaining in the Director's position would inhibit and delay this mending effort," said Skoog.

A resolution was passed at the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention in October calling for the firing of Sommerville and the dozen game department biologists who took unpaid leave to campaign in favor of the repeal.

Gov.-Elect Bill Sheffield said

after his election that he did not approve of their actions because it was too political and "would not forget" what they did.

No termination of the biologists has taken place.

Skoog told Sommerville that he thought about the termination when Sommerville took his unpaid leave to campaign in favor of Proposition 7 which would have repealed the existing state subsistence law and replaced it with one which would have included no priority for anyone.

Skoog's letter stated that Gov. Jay Hammond asked him to not fire Sommerville before the election to avoid making a martyr of Sommerville who became a well-used spokesman for the pro-repealers.

