

Haul road to open

The North Slope Haul Road may remain open this winter as a result of a compromise struck this past weekend between Sen. John Sackett, R-Galena, and other legislative leaders.

However, access and travel on the road will be restricted to commercial use only. And steps will be taken to protect the road corridor's fish and game resources.

Sackett has consistently opposed public funding of the road on a year-round basis because of his concern over the possible impact on fish and

game resources of Interior Alaska that might result from increased traffic.

However, over the weekend, after meetings with Sen. Bill Sumner, R-Anchorage, and Sen. George Hohman, D-Bethel, Sackett agreed to support legislative approval early in 1980 for additional funds to keep the road open.

At the end of the last session, only enough funds were appropriated to keep the road open for half a year. This prompted a strong reaction from Fair-

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banks legislators and the trucking industry who claimed severe economic hardship would result from the road closure.

Some Fairbanks Legislators, taken with calling themselves the "Killer Mosquitos," went so far as to threaten to hold up the proposed August special session of the legislature if the haul road question went unresolved.

Sackett's main concern, one that he has maintained for 10 years, is that increased pressure on wildlife resources would hurt rural residents who depend upon them were the road opened to unrestricted traffic.

Sackett was supported in

his position by North Slope Borough Mayor Eben Hopson. Hopson's office said today that while they would like to see the road closed, the North Slope Borough will continue to support Sen. Sackett as long as the road is not opened to casual tourist and hunting and fishing traffic and game resources can be protected.
