

Brevard County sea turtle protection group...

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1-2 minutes

COCOA BEACH — LIGHTS OUT. A Brevard County sea turtle protection group will ask city officials this week for a permit to resume nighttime beach patrols with all-terrain vehicles. The Brevard Sea Turtle Preservation Society was told to stop using the vehicles on Cocoa Beach two weeks ago after it complained about outdoor lights at the oceanfront estate of Al Neuharth, chairman of the Gannett newspaper chain. Society president Peter Bandre Saturday said volunteers want to ask officials to reconsider their decision. If the decision is not changed, the society will ask the city council for a special permit to ride on the beach. All the lights, except three small spotlights, were turned off behind Neuharth's Pumpkin Center estate Friday at 11 p.m. A city ordinance bans lights after 11 p.m. each night during nesting season from May 1 to Oct. 31. Biologists say artificial lights distract hatchlings and can scare away nesting females. Neuharth could not be contacted to see if the lights will be off through nesting season.