

Turtle Patrol Gets Green Light To Resume Using Atvs At Night

August 6, 1988

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COCOA BEACH — City officials have agreed to let the Brevard Sea Turtle Preservation Society resume use of its all-terrain vehicles on Cocoa Beach for nighttime patrols.

At a city council meeting Thursday night, council members voted 3 to 2 to allow society volunteers to use ATVs to patrol the 6-mile stretch of beach for illegal beachfront lighting, turtle poachers and stranded hatchlings.

Society members, who patrol the beach about twice weekly, said they will resume their patrols this weekend.

The city's approval allows the society to use ATVs on the beach nightly from 11 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. during turtle nesting season from May 1 to Oct. 31. All lighting violations must be turned over to the city police department; no society members can knock on residents' doors.

The city may ban the vehicles from the beach if society members violate the conditions.

City officials stopped the society from using its ATVs on the beach in June after the society had a run-in with a prominent resident over brights lights at his oceanfront estate.