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# MEET THE MERCHANT



LUKE WHITTAKER

Mary and Skip Wilson opened Bay Trader along Sandridge Road in Long Beach in 1997. The store carries an extensive array of housewares, furniture and tools.

**By LUKE WHITTAKER**  
Coast River Business Journal

## When did the business open?

Mary: "We got married in 1996 and opened in 1997."

## What inspired you start the business?

Skip: "I had another business that was called Coast Trader, near 153rd and 103rd."

Mary: "Skip was county commissioner at the time. We had a plan if he was re-elected or wasn't."

Skip: "I wasn't."

Mary: "He had a house on the bay and I had one on the beach. My father was an auctioneer, so I was kind-of raised in the business. Our plan was to sell both of our places and build this one. So we built the building and we've been here for 22 years. It's just been the two of us buying and selling, we've never had any employees. We live in the building too. We have 2,000 square feet of retail, 2,000 square feet of living area and 2,000 square feet of workshop."

**Since you've opened in 1997, how has the business changed**

## Bay Trader

Skip and Mary Wilson, owners  
10555 Sandridge Rd., Long  
Beach  
360-642-2664

## or evolved?

Skip: "The internet has caused us to evolve."

## What impact has the internet had?

Skip: "It's been terrible. It's cut our business completely. The problem here has been Facebook

and Craigslist, the online markets. They really hurt. So we have to do the same thing and put things online."

Mary: "We're not really as enthusiastic about that as we could be."

## What impact did the 2008 recession have on the business?

Skip: "See these clocks up here (points to clocks on the wall). They dropped 60% in value in two years."

Mary: "Our business dropped off dramatically, probably 50%."

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