

**How clams came to be:**

One day the creator XÁLS was changing people into places, lands and beings. Some people did not want to be changed, and when they heard the creator was coming, they went down to the beach and dug some holes and hid themselves. The creator overheard them and came to where they were hiding and asked why they were hiding. They told him that they did not want to be changed. The creator said that if he was to change them, that it was for the good of all people, and then changed them into clams.

The people that tried to run away from XÁLS were changed into ŁÁU,ĶEM- Mussels, and TĒXĒTĒX- oysters, they were attached to the rocks. STĒLO,EM- the Cockle clam means enough of the little ones. The SQĒÁ,I, Littleneck clams were provided for hunger and, S'OXE, butter clams question why do you go there, this is the meaning of the word clam. ŚWAAM, the horse clam, tried to dig himself deeper into the sand and still does today. The word XÁLS meaning creator is contained in the word for digging clams. ĶEXÁLS, digging clams is a word that reminds us of the origin, I am going to dig, caused by the creator- a gift from the creator.

We are reminded that the creators choices are his choices and within this he has given us a teaching, in life there are things that we have no choice over- who comes and who goes, even if it hurts. All clams have stories of how they came to be and how they relate to the “reverence for life”.

It is a sacred law given to us by the creator to look after the islands, we address the islands as our relatives, we are to look after them like our relatives, and in turn they will look after our people. This is the law of the people.

XÁLS and the ways of the sea told us how to live with others, eat well and prosper through sharing and trade. - John Elliott