

The Klallam people have a deep connection to the Elwha River and the land surrounding it. The elders have always said the Elwha River is sacred. Stories of villages and events that take place on this river have been passed down through the generations. During the removal of the 2 dams on the Elwha River these stories have grown greater than just a legend. Archaeological finds have provided tangible evidence that the Klallam people utilized this river for thousands of years, and have even uncovered the site where the oldest Klallam story is to have taken place; the story of when humans were created.

The Creation Story

Klallam legends tell of a sacred place on the Elwha River where humans were created, bathed and blessed. Many of our ancestors who lived on the Elwha River spoke about a place on the river where there is a big flat rock with two holes in it that contain water, called “spčú?”, which means water tight basket. These holes are the places from which dirt was scooped, out of which the Creator formed humans. Throughout time, this is the place where people went to get information about their future. For example, if you reached into the water and pulled out a deer hair, you would be a good hunter. If you pulled out a fish bone it meant you would be a good fisherman. If you pulled out a shell it would mean wealth. Before visiting this site the people would first cleanse and prepare their minds and bodies by fasting, meditating, & bathing.



Illustrated by Roger Fernandes
Text by Wendy R. Sampson