

DONOR PROFILE

Investing in Our Future The Importance of Fostering Environmental Stewardship in the Next Generation

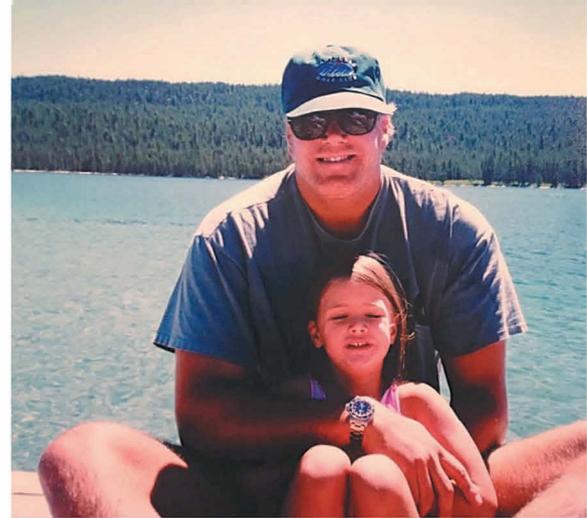
BY RICHARD LOCKWOOD CHILTON JR.
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If you've ever noticed a flower growing through a crack on the sidewalk, you've witnessed the marvel of nature's resiliency. Our planet's species adapt to human interference for survival, but we cannot underestimate their fragility. Yes, the flower can find a way to bloom through the concrete, but it will not thrive. We must remember that these vast ecosystems exist despite us, not because of us.

As a long-term financial investor, I make decisions with an outlook that spans decades. As a conservationist, I apply the same type of thinking. When it comes to our finances, we are accustomed to the idea of "investing in our future." A portion of our paycheck contributes to our 401(k) plan, our monthly mortgage payments help us build equity in our homes; but far too often, our planet's long-term future is robbed in favor of short-term convenience.

While environmental reform has become top of mind in recent decades, conservation has been a priority within our country since Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. When I think of the splendor of our National Park System it pains me to think of what could have been if these areas were not protected long ago.

The shift towards viewing our natural resources as assets to be maintained and preserved, rather than commodities to be bought and sold, is a perspective that is important to instill



COURTESY THE CHILTON FAMILY

Richard Lockwood Chilton with his daughter, Charlotte Chilton, experiencing the great outdoors in 2000.

in future generations. We must dedicate the necessary means to achieve an end that is bigger than the individual, even if we will not reap the benefits in our own lifetime. Personally, that's why I support conservation organizations like Friends of Acadia, whose initiatives have the power to create lasting legacies and will be invaluable to the lives of my grandchildren, their grandchildren, and so on.

There is no endpoint to preserving our natural resources, protecting our environment, and restoring wildlife populations; it remains an ever-changing battle to protect the future by preserving the past. Every conservationist's journey began with some type of experience within nature highlighting how crucial it is for people to connect with the natural world before they can be motivated to protect it.

Through programs like those at Friends of Acadia, we can promote education and accessibility to nature to secure the next generation of conservationists who will take up this cause and improve upon the work we've achieved thus far.

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