

# **Statement of Additional Information**

Dated: May 15, 2023

## **North Star Small Cap Value Fund Institutional Class Shares WFICX Investor Class Shares WSCVX**

This Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”) provides general information about the North Star Small Cap Value Fund (the “Fund”) a series of Northern Lights Fund Trust II (the “Trust”). This SAI is not a prospectus and should be read in conjunction with the Fund’s current prospectus for Institutional Class and Investor Class shares dated May 15, 2023 (the “Prospectus”), as supplemented and amended from time to time, which is incorporated herein by reference. To obtain a copy of the Prospectus free of charge, please write or call the Fund at the address or telephone number below:

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## **The Trust**

The North Star Small Cap Value Fund (the “Fund”) is a series of Northern Lights Fund Trust II, a Delaware statutory trust (the “Trust”) organized on August 26, 2010.

The Trust is registered as an open-end management investment company. The Trust is governed by its Board of Trustees (the “Board” or “Trustees”). The Fund may issue an unlimited number of shares of beneficial interest. All shares of the Fund have equal rights and privileges. Each share of the Fund is entitled to one vote on all matters as to which shares are entitled to vote. In addition, each share of the Fund is entitled to participate equally with other shares (i) in dividends and distributions declared by the Fund and (ii) on liquidation to its proportionate share of the assets remaining after satisfaction of outstanding liabilities. Shares of the Fund are fully paid, non-assessable and fully transferable when issued and have no pre-emptive, conversion or exchange rights. Fractional shares have proportionately the same rights, including voting rights, as are provided for a full share.

The Fund is a diversified series of the Trust. The Fund’s investment objectives, restrictions and policies are more fully described here and in the Prospectus. The Board may add classes to and reclassify the shares of the Fund, start other series and offer shares of a new fund under the Trust at any time.

The Fund has registered two classes of shares: Institutional Class shares and Investor Class shares. Each share class represents an interest in the same assets of the Fund, has the same rights and is identical in all material respects except that (i) each class of shares may be subject to different (or no) sales loads, (ii) each class of shares may bear different (or no) distribution fees; (iii) each class of shares may have different shareholder features, such as minimum investment amounts; (iv) certain other class-specific expenses will be borne solely by the class to which such expenses are attributable, including transfer agent fees attributable to a specific class of shares, printing and postage expenses related to preparing and distributing materials to current shareholders of a specific class, registration fees paid by a specific class of shares, the expenses of administrative personnel and services required to support the shareholders of a specific class, litigation or other legal expenses relating to a class of shares, Trustees’ fees or expenses paid as a result of issues relating to a specific class of shares and accounting fees and expenses relating to a specific class of shares and (v) each class has exclusive voting rights with respect to matters relating to its own distribution arrangements. Each share of the Fund is entitled to one vote on all matters as to which shares are entitled to vote. In addition, each share of the Fund is entitled to participate equally with other shares on a class-specific basis (i) in dividends and distributions declared by the Fund and (ii) on liquidation to its proportionate share of the assets remaining after satisfaction of outstanding liabilities. Shares of the Fund are fully paid, non-assessable and fully transferable when issued and have no pre-emptive, conversion or exchange rights. Fractional shares have proportionately the same rights, including voting rights, as are provided for a full share.

History of the Fund. The Fund is a series of the Trust, and commenced operations on May 15, 2023. Prior to becoming a series of the Trust, the Fund was organized as a series of the Walthausen Funds, an Ohio business trust, and was known as the Walthausen Small Cap Value Fund (“Predecessor Fund”). The Predecessor Fund’s Investor Class shares and Institutional Class shares commenced operations on February 1, 2008, and December 31, 2018, respectively. The Predecessor Fund’s fiscal year was from February 1 to January 31. The Fund’s fiscal year will be from December 1 to November 30.

## **The Trust’s Agreement and Declaration of Trust - General**

Under the Trust’s Agreement and Declaration of Trust, each Trustee will continue in office until the termination of the Trust or his/her earlier death, incapacity, resignation or removal. Shareholders can remove a Trustee to the extent provided by the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “1940 Act”) and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder. Vacancies may be filled by a majority of the remaining Trustees, except insofar as the 1940 Act may require the election by shareholders. As a result, normally no annual or regular meetings of shareholders will be held unless matters arise requiring a vote of shareholders under the Agreement and Declaration of Trust or the 1940 Act.

The Trust is not required to and does not intend to hold annual meetings of shareholders.

### **The Trust's Agreement and Declaration of Trust – Shareholder Derivative Actions**

A shareholder may bring derivative action on behalf of the Trust only if the shareholder or shareholders first make a pre-suit demand upon the Trustees to bring the subject action unless an effort to cause the Trustees to bring such action is excused. A demand on the Trustees shall only be excused if a majority of the Board of Trustees, or a majority of any committee established by the Board to consider the merits of such action, has a personal financial interest in the action at issue.

North Star Investment Management Corp. (the “Adviser”) serves as the investment adviser to the Fund.

### **Investment Policies, Strategies and Associated Risks**

The investment objective of the North Star Small Cap Value is to achieve long-term capital appreciation.

The following pages contain more detailed information about the types of instruments in which the Fund may invest, strategies the Adviser may employ in pursuit of the Fund's investment objective and a summary of related risks.

#### ***Equity Securities***

An equity security (such as a stock, partnership interest or other beneficial interest in an issuer) represents a proportionate share of the ownership of a company. Its value is based on the success of the company's business, any income paid to stockholders, the value of its assets and general market conditions. Common stocks and preferred stocks are examples of equity securities. Preferred stocks are equity securities that often pay dividends at a specific rate and have a preference over common stocks in dividend payments and liquidation of assets. Some preferred stocks may be convertible into common stock. Convertible securities are securities (such as debt securities or preferred stock) that may be converted into or exchanged for a specified amount of common stock of the same or different issuer within a particular period of time at a specified price or formula.

The risks of investing in companies in general include business failure and reliance on erroneous reports. To the extent the Fund is invested in the equity securities of small- or medium-size companies, it will be exposed to the risks of smaller sized companies. Small- and medium-size companies, directly or indirectly, often have narrower markets for their goods and/or services and more limited managerial and financial resources than larger, more established companies. Furthermore, those companies often have limited product lines or services, markets or financial resources, or are dependent on a small management group. In addition, because these securities are not well-known to the investing public, do not have significant institutional ownership and are followed by relatively few security analysts, there will normally be less publicly available information concerning these securities compared to what is available for the securities of larger companies. Adverse publicity and investor perceptions, whether or not based on fundamental analysis, can decrease the value and liquidity of securities held by the Fund. As a result, their performance can be more volatile and they face greater risk of business failure, which could increase the volatility of the Fund's portfolio.

#### ***Preferred Stock***

A preferred stock is a blend of the characteristics of a bond and common stock. It can offer the higher yield of a bond and has priority over common stock in equity ownership, but does not have the seniority of a bond and, unlike common stock, its participation in the issuer's growth may be limited. Preferred stock has preference over common stock in the receipt of dividends and in any residual assets after payment to creditors should the issuer be dissolved. Although the dividend is set at a fixed annual rate, in some circumstances it can be changed or omitted by the issuer.

### ***Short Sales***

The Fund may seek to hedge investments or realize additional gains through short sales. Short sales are transactions in which the Fund sells a security it does not own in anticipation of a decline in the value of that security relative to the long positions held by the Fund. To complete such a transaction, the Fund must borrow the security to make delivery to the buyer. The Fund then is obligated to replace the security borrowed by purchasing it at the market price at or prior to the time of replacement. The price at such time may be more or less than the price at which the security was sold by the Fund. Until the security is replaced, the Fund is required to repay the lender any dividends or interest that accrues during the period of the loan. To borrow the security, the Fund also may be required to pay a premium, which would increase the cost of the security sold. The net proceeds of the short sale will be retained by the broker (or by the Fund's custodian, Union Bank, National Association (the "Custodian")) in a special custody account, to the extent necessary to meet margin requirements, until the short position is closed out. The Fund also will incur transaction costs in effecting short sales.

The Fund will incur a loss as a result of the short sale if the price of the security increases between the date of the short sale and the date on which the Fund replaces the borrowed security. Short sales may, however, protect the Fund against the risk of losses in the value of its portfolio securities because any unrealized losses with respect to such portfolio securities should be wholly or partially offset by a corresponding gain in the short position. However, any potential gains in such portfolio securities should be wholly or partially offset by a corresponding loss in the short position. The extent to which such gains or losses are offset will depend upon the amount of securities sold short relative to the amount the Fund owns, either directly or indirectly, and, in the case where the Fund owns convertible securities, changes in the conversion premium. There can be no assurance that the Fund will be able to close out a short position at any particular time or at an acceptable price.

The Fund also must segregate liquid assets equal to the difference between (a) the market value of the securities sold short at the time they were sold short and (b) the value of the collateral deposited with the broker in connection with the short sale (not including the proceeds from the short sale). While the short position is open, the Fund must maintain segregated assets at such a level that the amount segregated plus the amount deposited with the broker as collateral equal the current market value of the securities sold short.

### ***Other Investment Companies***

The Fund may invest up to 100% of its net assets in shares of other investment companies, including money market mutual Fund, other mutual Fund or exchange traded Fund ("ETFs"). The Fund's investments in money market mutual Fund may be used for cash management purposes and to maintain liquidity in order to satisfy redemption requests or pay unanticipated expenses. The Fund limits its investments in securities issued by other investment companies in accordance with the 1940 Act or with certain terms and conditions of applicable exemptive orders issued by the SEC and approved by the Board of Trustees. Section 12(d)(1) of the 1940 Act precludes the Fund from acquiring (i) more than 3% of the total outstanding shares of another investment company; (ii) shares of another investment company having an aggregate value in excess of 5% of the value of the total assets of the Fund; or (iii) shares of another registered investment company and all other investment companies having an aggregate value in excess of 10% of the value of the total assets of the Fund. However, Section 12(d)(1)(F) of the 1940 Act provides that the provisions of paragraph 12(d)(1) shall not apply to securities purchased or otherwise acquired by the Fund if (i) immediately after such purchase or acquisition not more than 3% of the total outstanding shares of such investment company is owned by the Fund and all affiliated persons of the Fund; and (ii) the Fund has not offered or sold, and is not proposing to offer or sell its shares through a principal underwriter or otherwise at a public or offering price that includes a sales load of more than 1 1/2%. SEC Rule 12d1-3 provides, however, that the Fund may rely on the Section 12(d)(1)(F) exemption and charge a sales load in excess of 1 1/2% provided the sales load and any service fee charged does not exceed limits set forth in applicable Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. ("FINRA") rules.

If the Fund invests in investment companies, including ETFs, pursuant to Section 12(d)(1)(F), it must comply with the following voting restrictions: when the Fund exercises voting rights, by proxy or otherwise, with respect to investment companies owned by the Fund, the Fund will either seek instruction from the Fund's shareholders with

regard to the voting of all proxies and vote in accordance with such instructions, or vote the shares held by the Fund in the same proportion as the vote of all other holders of such security. In addition, an investment company purchased by the Fund pursuant to Section 12(d)(1)(F) shall not be required to redeem its shares in an amount exceeding 1% of such investment company's total outstanding shares in any period of less than thirty days. In addition to the advisory and operational fees the Fund bears directly in connection with its own operation, the Fund also bears its *pro rata* portion of the advisory and operational expenses incurred indirectly through investments in other investment companies. In addition, ETFs are subject to the following risks that do not apply to conventional mutual Fund: (1) the market price of the ETF's shares may trade at a discount to their net asset value; (2) an active trading market for an ETF's shares may not develop or be maintained; or (3) trading of an ETF's shares may be halted if the listing exchange's officials deem such action appropriate, the shares are de-listed from the exchange, or the activation of market-wide "circuit breakers" (which are tied to large decreases in stock prices) halts stock trading generally. Additionally, ETFs have management fees, which increase their cost.

### ***Exchange-Traded Fund ("ETFS")***

An ETF generally is an open-end investment company, unit investment trust or a portfolio of securities deposited with a depository in exchange for depository receipts. The portfolios of ETFs generally consist of common stocks that closely track the performance and dividend yield of specific securities indices, either broad market, sector or international. ETFs provide investors the opportunity to buy or sell throughout the day an entire portfolio of stocks in a single security. Although index mutual funds are similar, they are generally sold and redeemed only once per day at market close. Broad securities market index ETFs include Standard & Poor's Depository Receipts ("SPDRs"), which are interests in a unit investment trust representing an undivided interest in a portfolio of all of the common stocks of the S&P 500 Index. The ETFs in which the Fund invests are subject to liquidity risk. Liquidity risk exists when particular investments are difficult to purchase or sell, possibly preventing the sale of the security at an advantageous time or price. To the extent that the ETFs in which the Fund invests hold securities of companies with smaller market capitalizations or securities with substantial market risk, they will have a greater exposure to liquidity risk.

### ***Foreign Investments and Currencies***

The Fund may invest in securities of foreign issuers that are not publicly traded in the United States. The Fund may also invest in American Depositary Receipts ("ADRs"), European Depositary Receipts ("EDRs") and Global Depositary Receipts ("GDRs"), foreign securities traded on a national securities market and may purchase and sell foreign currency on a spot basis and enter into forward currency contracts (see "Forward Currency Contracts," below).

*Depository Receipts.* The Fund may invest its assets in securities of foreign issuers in the form of depository receipts, including ADRs, EDRs and GDRs, which are securities representing securities of foreign issuers. A purchaser of unsponsored depository receipts may not have unlimited voting rights and may not receive as much information about the issuer of the underlying securities as with a sponsored depository receipt. Generally, ADRs, in registered form, are denominated in U.S. dollars and are designed for use in the U.S. securities markets. ADRs are receipts typically issued by a U.S. bank or trust company evidencing ownership of the underlying securities. For purposes of the Fund's investment policies, ADRs are deemed to have the same classification as the underlying securities they represent. Thus, an ADR representing ownership of common stock will be treated as common stock.

*Risks of Investing in Foreign Securities.* Investments in foreign securities involve certain inherent risks, including the following:

*Political and Economic Factors.* Individual foreign economies of certain countries may differ favorably or unfavorably from the U.S. economy in such respects as growth of gross national product, rate of inflation, capital reinvestment, resource self-sufficiency, diversification and balance of payments position. The internal politics of certain foreign countries may not be as stable as those of the United States. Governments in certain foreign countries also continue to participate to a significant degree, through ownership interest or regulation, in their respective economies. Action by these governments could include restrictions on foreign investment, nationalization, expropriation of goods or

imposition of taxes, and could have a significant effect on market prices of securities and payment of interest. The economies of many foreign countries are heavily dependent upon international trade and are accordingly affected by the trade policies and economic conditions of their trading partners. Enactment by these trading partners of protectionist trade legislation could have a significant adverse effect upon the securities markets of such countries.

Currency Fluctuations. The Fund may invest in securities denominated in foreign currencies. Accordingly, a change in the value of any such currency against the U.S. dollar will result in a corresponding change in the U.S. dollar value of the Fund's assets denominated in that currency. Such changes will also affect the Fund's income. The value of the Fund's assets may also be affected significantly by currency restrictions and exchange control regulations enacted from time to time.

Market Characteristics. Many foreign securities in which the Fund may invest could be purchased in over-the-counter markets or on exchanges located in the countries in which the principal offices of the issuers of the various securities are located, if that is the best available market. Foreign exchanges and markets may be more volatile than those in the United States. While growing in volume, they usually have substantially less volume than U.S. markets, and the Fund's foreign securities may be less liquid and more volatile than U.S. securities. Moreover, settlement practices for transactions in foreign markets may differ from those in U.S. markets, and may include delays beyond periods customary in the United States. Foreign security trading practices, including those involving securities settlement where Fund assets may be released prior to receipt of payment or securities, may expose the Fund to increased risk in the event of a failed trade or the insolvency of a foreign broker-dealer.

Legal and Regulatory Matters. Certain foreign countries may have less supervision of securities markets, brokers and issuers of securities, and less financial information available from issuers, than is available in the United States.

Taxes. The interest and dividends payable on certain of the Fund's foreign portfolio securities may be subject to foreign withholding taxes, thus reducing the net amount of income available for distribution to Fund shareholders.

Costs. To the extent that the Fund invests in foreign securities, its expense ratio is likely to be higher than those of investment companies investing only in domestic securities, because the cost of maintaining the custody of foreign securities is higher.

Emerging Markets. The Fund's investments in foreign securities may include securities of companies located in developing or emerging markets, which entail additional risks, including: less social, political and economic stability; smaller securities markets and lower trading volume, which may result in less liquidity and greater price volatility; national policies that may restrict the Fund's investment opportunities, including restrictions on investments in issuers or industries, or expropriation or confiscation of assets or property; and less developed legal structures governing private or foreign investment.

Forward Currency Contracts. The Fund may enter into forward currency contracts in anticipation of changes in currency exchange rates. A forward currency contract is an obligation to purchase or sell a specific currency at a future date, which may be any fixed number of days from the date of the contract agreed upon by the parties, at a price set at the time of the contract. For example, the Fund might purchase a particular currency or enter into a forward currency contract to preserve the U.S. dollar price of securities it intends to or has contracted to purchase. Alternatively, it might sell a particular currency on either a spot or forward basis to hedge against an anticipated decline in the dollar value of securities it intends to or has contracted to sell. Although this strategy could minimize the risk of loss due to a decline in the value of the hedged currency, it could also limit any potential gain from an increase in the value of the currency.

In considering whether to invest in the securities of a foreign company, the Adviser considers such factors as the characteristics of the particular company, differences between economic trends and the performance of securities markets within the U.S. and those within other countries, and also factors relating to the general economic, governmental and social conditions of the country or countries where the company is located. The extent to which the Fund will be invested in foreign companies and countries and depository receipts will fluctuate from time to time within the limitations described in the Prospectus, depending on the Adviser's assessment of prevailing market, economic and other conditions.

### ***Swap Agreements***

The Fund may enter into swap agreements for purposes of attempting to gain exposure to equity or debt securities without actually purchasing those securities, or to hedge a position. Swap agreements are two-party contracts entered into primarily by institutional investors for periods ranging from a day to more than one year. In a standard "swap" transaction, two parties agree to exchange the returns (or differentials in rates of return) earned or realized on particular predetermined investments or instruments. The gross returns to be exchanged or "swapped" between the parties are calculated with respect to a "notional amount," i.e., the return on or increase in value of a particular dollar amount invested in a "basket" of securities representing a particular index.

Most swap agreements entered into by the Fund calculate the obligations of the parties to the agreement on a "net basis." Consequently, the Fund's current obligations (or rights) under a swap agreement will generally be equal only to the net amount to be paid or received under the agreement based on the relative values of the positions held by each party to the agreement (the "net amount"). Payments may be made at the conclusion of a swap agreement or periodically during its term.

Swap agreements do not involve the delivery of securities or other underlying assets. Accordingly, if a swap is entered into on a net basis, if the other party to a swap agreement defaults, the Fund's risk of loss consists of the net amount of payments that the Fund is contractually entitled to receive, if any.

The net amount of the excess, if any, of the Fund's obligations over its entitlements with respect to a swap agreement entered into on a net basis will be accrued daily and an amount of cash or liquid asset having an aggregate net asset value at least equal to the accrued excess will be maintained in an account with the Custodian. The Fund will also establish and maintain such accounts with respect to its total obligations under any swaps that are not entered into on a net basis. Obligations under swap agreements so covered will not be construed to be "senior securities" for purposes of the Fund's investment restriction concerning senior securities.

Because they are two-party contracts and because they may have terms of greater than seven days, swap agreements may be considered to be illiquid for the Fund's illiquid investment limitations. The Fund will not enter into any swap agreement unless the Adviser believes that the other party to the transaction is creditworthy. The Fund bears the risk of loss of the amount expected to be received under a swap agreement in the event of the default or bankruptcy of a swap agreement counter-party.

The Fund may enter into a swap agreement in circumstances where the Adviser believes that it may be more cost effective or practical than buying the securities represented by such index or a futures contract or an option on such index. The counter-party to any swap agreement will typically be a bank, investment banking firm or broker/dealer. The counter-party will generally agree to pay the Fund the amount, if any, by which the notional amount of the swap agreement would have increased in value had it been invested in the particular stocks represented in the index, plus the dividends that would have been received on those stocks. The Fund will agree to pay to the counter-party a floating rate of interest on the notional amount of the swap agreement plus the amount, if any, by which the notional amount would have decreased in value had it been invested in such stocks. Therefore, the return to the Fund on any swap agreement should be the gain or loss on the notional amount plus dividends on the stocks less the interest paid by the Fund on the notional amount.



The swap market has grown substantially in recent years with a large number of banks and investment banking firms acting both as principals and as agents utilizing standardized swap documentation. As a result, the swap market has become relatively liquid in comparison with the markets for other similar instruments that are traded in the OTC market.

### ***Fixed-Income Securities***

The Fund may invest in a wide range of fixed-income securities, which may include obligations of any rating or maturity.

The Fund may invest in investment grade corporate debt securities and lower-rated corporate debt securities (commonly known as “junk bonds”). Lower-rated or high yield debt securities include corporate high yield debt securities, zero-coupon securities, payment-in kind securities and strips. Investment grade corporate bonds are those rated BBB or better by Standard & Poor’s Rating Service (“S&P”) or Baa or better by Moody’s Investors Service (“Moody’s”). Securities rated BBB by S&P are considered investment grade, but Moody’s considers securities rated Baa to have speculative characteristics. The Fund may also invest in unrated securities.

Junk Bonds. The Fund may invest in junk bonds. Junk bonds generally offer a higher current yield than that available for higher-grade issues. However, lower-rated securities involve higher risks, in that they are especially subject to adverse changes in general economic conditions and in the industries in which the issuers are engaged, to changes in the financial condition of the issuers and to price fluctuations in response to changes in interest rates. During periods of economic downturn or rising interest rates, highly leveraged issuers may experience financial stress that could adversely affect their ability to make payments of interest and principal and increase the possibility of default. In addition, the market for lower-rated debt securities has expanded rapidly in recent years, and its growth paralleled a long economic expansion. At times in recent years, the prices of many lower-rated debt securities declined substantially, reflecting an expectation that many issuers of such securities might experience financial difficulties. As a result, the yields on lower-rated debt securities rose dramatically, but such higher yields did not reflect the value of the income stream that holders of such securities expected, but rather, the risk that holders of such securities could lose a substantial portion of their value as a result of the issuers’ financial restructuring or default. There can be no assurance that such declines will not recur. The market for lower-rated debt issues generally is thinner and less active than that for higher quality securities, which may limit the Fund’s ability to sell such securities at fair value in response to changes in the economy or financial markets. Adverse publicity and investor perceptions, whether or not based on fundamental analysis, may also decrease the values and liquidity of lower-rated securities, especially in a thinly traded market. Changes by recognized rating services in their rating of a fixed-income security may affect the value of these investments. The Fund will not necessarily dispose of a security when its rating is reduced below its rating at the time of purchase. However, the Adviser will monitor the investment to determine whether continued investment in the security will assist in meeting the Fund’s investment objective.

Corporate Debt Securities. Corporate debt securities are fixed-income securities issued by businesses to finance their operations, although corporate debt instruments may also include bank loans to companies. Notes, bonds, debentures and commercial paper are the most common types of corporate debt securities, with the primary difference being their maturities and secured or unsecured status. Commercial paper has the shortest term and is usually unsecured.

The broad category of corporate debt securities includes debt issued by domestic or foreign companies of all kinds, including those with small-, mid- and large-capitalizations. Corporate debt may be rated investment-grade or below investment-grade and may carry variable or floating rates of interest.

Because of the wide range of types and maturities of corporate debt securities, as well as the range of creditworthiness of its issuers, corporate debt securities have widely varying potentials for return and risk profiles. For example, commercial paper issued by a large established domestic corporation that is rated investment-grade may have a modest return on principal, but carries relatively limited risk. On the other hand, a long-term corporate

note issued by a small foreign corporation from an emerging market country that has not been rated may have the potential for relatively large returns on principal, but carries a relatively high degree of risk.

Corporate debt securities carry both credit risk and interest rate risk. Credit risk is the risk that the Fund could lose money if the issuer of a corporate debt security is unable to pay interest or repay principal when it is due. Some corporate debt securities that are rated below investment-grade are generally considered speculative because they present a greater risk of loss, including default, than higher quality debt securities. The credit risk of a particular issuer's debt security may vary based on its priority for repayment. For example, higher ranking (senior) debt securities have a higher priority than lower ranking (subordinated) securities. This means that the issuer might not make payments on subordinated securities while continuing to make payments on senior securities. In addition, in the event of bankruptcy, holders of higher-ranking senior securities may receive amounts otherwise payable to the holders of more junior securities. Interest rate risk is the risk that the value of certain corporate debt securities will tend to fall when interest rates rise. In general, corporate debt securities with longer terms tend to fall more in value when interest rates rise than corporate debt securities with shorter terms.

Zero-Coupon Securities. Zero-coupon securities make no periodic interest payments, but are sold at a deep discount from their face value. The buyer recognizes a rate of return determined by the gradual appreciation of the security, which is redeemed at face value on a specified maturity date. The discount varies depending on the time remaining until maturity, as well as market interest rates, liquidity of the security and the issuer's perceived credit quality. If the issuer defaults, the holder may not receive any return on its investment. Because zero-coupon securities bear no interest and compound semiannually at the rate fixed at the time of issuance, their value generally is more volatile than the value of other fixed-income securities. Since zero-coupon bondholders do not receive interest payments, when interest rates rise, zero-coupon securities fall more dramatically in value than bonds paying interest on a current basis. When interest rates fall, zero-coupon securities rise more rapidly in value because the bonds reflect a fixed rate of return. An investment in zero-coupon and delayed interest securities may cause the Fund to recognize income and make distributions to shareholders before it receives any cash payments on its investment.

Unrated Debt Securities. Unrated debt, while not necessarily lower in quality than rated securities, may not have as broad a market. Because of the size and perceived demand for the issue, among other factors, certain issuers may decide not to pay the cost of getting a rating for their bonds. The creditworthiness of the issuer, as well as any financial institution or other party responsible for payments on the security, will be analyzed to determine whether to purchase unrated bonds.

There is a risk that an issuer may redeem a bond prior to the stated maturity date. The early redemption may occur through a call provision that allows the issuer to retire the bonds on a certain date at a predetermined price. The details of the call and/or sinking fund are typically outlined in the bond indenture. If bonds are redeemed earlier than anticipated, either through a call or sinking fund, the Fund may incur a loss.

Municipal Debt Obligations. The Fund may invest in municipal obligations. Municipal securities generally are fixed-income securities, and include debt obligations issued by governmental entities to obtain Fund for various public purposes, including the construction of a wide range of public facilities, the refunding of outstanding obligations, the payment of general operating expenses, and the extension of loans to public institutions and facilities. In some cases, municipal obligations are represented by custodial receipts evidencing rights to receive specific future interest payments, principal payments, or both, on the underlying municipal securities held by the custodian. Under such arrangements, the holder of the custodial receipt has the option to tender the underlying municipal securities at its face value to the sponsor (usually a bank or broker dealer or other financial institution), which is paid periodic fees equal to the difference between the bond's fixed coupon rate and the rate that would cause the bond, coupled with the tender option, to trade at par on the date of a rate adjustment.

Taxable Obligations. The Fund may invest in taxable municipal obligations. Taxable municipal obligations are typically issued by municipalities or their agencies for purposes which do not qualify for federal tax

exemption, but do qualify for state and local tax exemption. These debt obligations are issued to finance the cost of buying, building or improving various projects, such as sporting facilities, health care facilities, housing projects, electric, water and sewer utilities, and colleges or universities. Generally, payments on these debt obligations depend on the revenues generated by the projects, excise taxes or state appropriations, or the debt obligations can be backed by the government's taxing power. Due to federal taxation, taxable municipal obligations offer yields more comparable to other taxable sectors such as corporate bonds or agency bonds than to other municipal obligations. These debt obligations are federally taxable to individuals but may be exempt from state and local taxes.

**Tax-Exempt Obligations.** The Fund may invest in Tax-Exempt Obligations. Tax-Exempt Obligations include debt obligations issued by governmental entities to obtain Fund for various public purposes, such as the construction of a wide range of public facilities, the refunding of outstanding obligations, the payment of general operating expenses, and the extension of loans to other public institutions and facilities. Private activity bonds that are issued by or on behalf of public authorities to finance various privately-operated facilities are included within the term Tax-Exempt Obligations if the interest paid thereon is both exempt from federal income tax and not treated as a preference item for individuals for purposes of the federal alternative minimum tax.

The two principal classifications of Tax-Exempt Obligations consist of "general obligation" and "revenue" issues. General obligation bonds are typically backed by the full faith and credit of the issuer, whereas revenue bonds are payable from a specific project or other limited source of revenue. The Fund may also acquire "moral obligation" issues, which are normally issued by special purpose authorities.

### ***Convertible Securities***

The Fund may invest in convertible securities. A convertible security is a fixed-income security (a debt instrument or a preferred stock) which may be converted at a stated price within a specified period of time into a certain quantity of the common stock of the same or a different issuer. Convertible securities are senior to common stocks in an issuer's capital structure, but are usually subordinated to similar non-convertible securities. While providing a fixed-income stream (generally higher in yield than the income derivable from common stock but lower than that afforded by a similar non-convertible security), a convertible security also gives an investor the opportunity, through its conversion feature, to participate in the capital appreciation of the issuing company depending upon a market price advance in the convertible security's underlying common stock.

### ***Warrants***

The Fund may invest in warrants. A warrant gives the holder a right to purchase at any time during a specified period a predetermined number of shares of common stock at a fixed price. Unlike convertible debt securities or preferred stock, warrants do not pay a fixed coupon or dividend. Investments in warrants involve certain risks, including the possible lack of a liquid market for resale of the warrants, potential price fluctuations as a result of speculation or other factors and failure of the price of the underlying security to reach or have reasonable prospects of reaching a level at which the warrant can be prudently exercised (in which event the warrant may expire without being exercised, resulting in a loss of the Fund's entire investment therein).

### ***Borrowing***

The Fund may borrow money for investment purposes, which is a form of leveraging. Leveraging investments, by purchasing securities with borrowed money, is a speculative technique that increases investment risk while increasing investment opportunity. Leverage will magnify changes in the Fund's net asset value and on the Fund's investments. Although the principal of such borrowings will be fixed, the Fund's assets may change in value during the time the borrowing is outstanding. Leverage also creates interest expenses for the Fund. To the extent the income derived from securities purchased with borrowed Fund exceeds the interest the Fund will have to pay, the Fund's net income will be greater than it would be if leverage were not used. Conversely, if the income from the assets obtained with borrowed Fund is not sufficient to cover the cost of leveraging, the net income of the Fund will be less than it would be if leverage were not used, and therefore the amount available for distribution to

shareholders as dividends will be reduced. The use of derivatives in connection with leverage creates the potential for significant loss.

The Fund may also borrow Fund to meet redemptions or for other emergency purposes. Such borrowings may be on a secured or unsecured basis at fixed or variable rates of interest. The 1940 Act requires the Fund to maintain continuous asset coverage of not less than 300% with respect to all borrowings. If such asset coverage should decline to less than 300% due to market fluctuations or other reasons, the Fund may be required to dispose of some of its portfolio holdings within three days in order to reduce the Fund's debt and restore the 300% asset coverage, even though it may be disadvantageous from an investment standpoint to dispose of assets at that time.

The Fund also may be required to maintain minimum average balances in connection with such borrowing or to pay a commitment or other fee to maintain a line of credit. Either of these requirements would increase the cost of borrowing over the stated interest rate.

Borrowing by the Fund creates an opportunity for increased net income, but at the same time, creates special risk considerations. For example, leveraging may exaggerate the effect on net asset value of any increase or decrease in the market value of the Fund's portfolio.

### ***Securities Lending***

The Fund may lend securities from its portfolio to brokers, dealers and financial institutions (but not individuals) in order to increase the return on its portfolio. The value of the loaned securities may not exceed one-third of a Fund's total net assets and loans of portfolio securities are fully collateralized based on values that are marked-to-market daily. The Fund will not enter into any portfolio security lending arrangement having a duration of longer than one year. The principal risk of portfolio lending is potential default or insolvency of the borrower. In either of these cases, the Fund could experience delays in recovering securities or collateral or could lose all or part of the value of the loaned securities. The Fund may pay reasonable administrative and custodial fees in connection with loans of portfolio securities and may pay a portion of the interest or fee earned thereon to the borrower or a placing broker.

In determining whether or not to lend a security to a particular broker, dealer or financial institution, the Adviser considers all relevant facts and circumstances, including the size, creditworthiness and reputation of the broker, dealer or financial institution. Any loans of portfolio securities are fully collateralized based on values that are marked-to-market daily. Any securities that the Fund may receive as collateral will not become part of the Fund's investment portfolio at the time of the loan and, in the event of a default by the borrower, the Fund will, if permitted by law, dispose of such collateral except for such part thereof that is a security in which the Fund is permitted to invest. During the time securities are on loan, the borrower will pay the Fund any accrued income on those securities, however, such payments of accrued income will not constitute "qualified dividend" income and will be taxable as ordinary income. For loaned securities, the Fund may invest the cash collateral and earn income or receive an agreed-upon fee from a borrower that has delivered cash-equivalent collateral. The Fund will be responsible for the risks associated with the investment of the cash collateral, including the risk that the Fund may lose money on the investment or may fail to earn sufficient income to meet its obligations to the borrower.

### ***Options, Futures and Other Strategies***

*General.* The Fund may use certain options (both traded on an exchange and over-the-counter ("OTC")), futures contracts (sometimes referred to as "futures") and options on futures contracts (collectively, "Financial Instruments") as a substitute for a comparable market position in the underlying security, to attempt to hedge or limit the exposure of the Fund's position, to create a synthetic money market position, for certain tax-related purposes and to effect closing transactions.

The use of Financial Instruments is subject to applicable regulations of the SEC, the several exchanges upon which they are traded and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (the "CFTC"). In addition, the Fund's ability to use Financial Instruments will be limited by tax considerations. In addition to the instruments, strategies and risks

described below and in the Prospectus, the Fund's Adviser may discover additional opportunities in connection with Financial Instruments and other similar or related techniques. These new opportunities may become available as the Adviser develops new techniques, as regulatory authorities broaden the range of permitted transactions and as new Financial Instruments or other techniques are developed. The Adviser may utilize these opportunities to the extent that they are consistent with the Fund's investment objective and permitted by the Fund's investment limitations and applicable regulatory authorities. The Prospectus or this SAI will be supplemented to the extent that new products or techniques involve materially different risks than those described below or in the Prospectus.

Special Risks. The use of Financial Instruments involves special considerations and risks, certain of which are described below. Risks pertaining to particular Financial Instruments are described in the sections that follow.

(1) Successful use of most Financial Instruments depends upon the Adviser's ability to predict movements of the overall securities markets, which requires different skills than predicting changes in the prices of individual securities. The ordinary spreads between prices in the cash and futures markets, due to the differences in the natures of those markets, are subject to distortion. Due to the possibility of distortion, a correct forecast of stock market trends by the Adviser may still not result in a successful transaction. The Adviser may be incorrect in their expectations as to the extent of market movements or the time span within which the movements take place, which, thus, may result in the strategy being unsuccessful.

(2) Options and futures prices can diverge from the prices of their underlying instruments. Options and futures prices are affected by such factors as current and anticipated short-term interest rates, changes in volatility of the underlying instrument and the time remaining until expiration of the contract, which may not affect security prices the same way. Imperfect or no correlation also may result from differing levels of demand in the options and futures markets and the securities markets, from structural differences in how options and futures and securities are traded and from imposition of daily price fluctuation limits or trading halts.

(3) As described below, the Fund might be required to maintain assets as "cover," maintain segregated accounts or make margin payments when it takes positions in Financial Instruments involving obligations to third parties (e.g., Financial Instruments other than purchased options). If the Fund were unable to close out its positions in such Financial Instruments, it might be required to continue to maintain such assets or accounts or make such payments until the position expired or matured. These requirements might impair the Fund's ability to sell a portfolio security or make an investment when it would otherwise be favorable to do so or require that the Fund sell a portfolio security at a disadvantageous time. The Fund's ability to close out a position in a Financial Instrument prior to expiration or maturity depends on the existence of a liquid secondary market or, in the absence of such a market, the ability and willingness of the other party to the transaction (the "counter-party") to enter into a transaction closing out the position. Therefore, there is no assurance that any position can be closed out at a time and price that is favorable to the Fund.

(4) Losses may arise due to unanticipated market price movements, lack of a liquid secondary market for any particular instrument at a particular time or due to losses from premiums paid by the Fund on options transactions.

Cover. Transactions using Financial Instruments, other than purchased options, expose the Fund to an obligation to another party. The Fund will not enter into any such transactions unless it owns either (1) an offsetting ("covered") position in securities or other options or futures contracts or (2) cash and liquid assets with a value, marked-to-market daily, sufficient to cover its potential obligations to the extent not covered as provided in (1) above. The Fund will comply with SEC guidelines regarding cover for these instruments and will, if the guidelines so require, set aside cash or liquid assets in an account with its Custodian, or another approved custodian, in the prescribed amount as determined daily.

Assets used as cover or held in an account cannot be sold while the position in the corresponding Financial Instrument is open, unless they are replaced with other appropriate assets. As a result, the commitment of a large

portion of the Fund's assets to cover accounts could impede portfolio management or the Fund's ability to meet redemption requests or other current obligations.

Options. The value of an option position will reflect, among other things, the current market value of the underlying investment, the time remaining until expiration, the relationship of the exercise price to the market price of the underlying investment and general market conditions. Options that expire unexercised have no value. Options currently are traded on the Chicago Board Options Exchange, the NYSE Amex Options exchange and other exchanges, as well as the OTC markets.

By buying a call option on a security, the Fund has the right, in return for the premium paid, to buy the security underlying the option at the exercise price. By writing (selling) a call option and receiving a premium, the Fund becomes obligated during the term of the option to deliver securities underlying the option at the exercise price if the option is exercised. By buying a put option, the Fund has the right, in return for the premium, to sell the security underlying the option at the exercise price. By writing a put option, the Fund becomes obligated during the term of the option to purchase the securities underlying the option at the exercise price.

Because options premiums paid or received by the Fund are small in relation to the market value of the investments underlying the options, buying and selling put and call options can be more speculative than investing directly in securities.

The Fund may effectively terminate its right or obligation under an option by entering into a closing transaction. For example, the Fund may terminate its obligation under a call or put option that it had written, by purchasing an identical call or put option. This is known as a closing purchase transaction. Conversely, the Fund may terminate a position in a put or call option it had purchased by writing an identical put or call option. This is known as a closing sale transaction. Closing transactions permit the Fund to realize profits or limit losses on an option position prior to its exercise or expiration.

Risks of Options on Securities. Exchange-traded options in the United States are issued by a clearing organization affiliated with the exchange on which the option is listed that, in effect, guarantees completion of every exchange-traded option transaction. In contrast, OTC options are contracts between the Fund and its counter-party (usually a securities dealer or a bank) with no clearing organization guarantee. Thus, when the Fund purchases an OTC option, it relies on the counter-party from whom it purchased the option to make or take delivery of the underlying investment upon exercise of the option. Failure by the counter-party to do so would result in the loss of any premium paid by the Fund as well as the loss of any expected benefit of the transaction.

The Fund's ability to establish and close out positions in exchange-traded options depends on the existence of a liquid market. However, there can be no assurance that such a market will exist at any particular time. Closing transactions can be made for OTC options only by negotiating directly with the counter-party or by a transaction in the secondary market if any such market exists. There can be no assurance that the Fund will in fact be able to close out an OTC option position at a favorable price prior to expiration. In the event of insolvency of the counter-party, the Fund might be unable to close out an OTC option position at any time prior to its expiration.

If the Fund were unable to affect a closing transaction for an option it had purchased, it would have to exercise the option to realize any profit. The inability to enter into a closing purchase transaction for a covered call option written by the Fund could cause material losses because the Fund would be unable to sell the investment used as cover for the written option until the option expires or is exercised.

Options on Indices. An index fluctuates with changes in the market values of the securities included in the index. Options on indices give the holder the right to receive an amount of cash upon exercise of the option. Receipt of this cash amount will depend upon the closing level of the index upon which the option is based being greater than (in the case of a call) or less than (in the case of a put) the exercise price of the option. Some stock index options are based on a broad market index such as the S&P 500 Index, the NYSE Composite Index or the NYSE Arca Major Market Index or on a narrower index such as the Philadelphia Stock Exchange Over-the-Counter Index.

Each of the exchanges has established limitations governing the maximum number of call or put options on the same index that may be bought or written by a single investor, whether acting alone or in concert with others (regardless of whether such options are written on the same or different exchanges or are held or written on one or more accounts or through one or more brokers). Under these limitations, option positions of all investment companies advised by the Adviser are combined for purposes of these limits. Pursuant to these limitations, an exchange may order the liquidation of positions and may impose other sanctions or restrictions. These positions limits may restrict the number of listed options that the Fund may buy or sell.

Puts and calls on indices are similar to puts and calls on securities or futures contracts except that all settlements are in cash and gain or loss depends on changes in the index in question rather than on price movements in individual securities or futures contracts. When the Fund writes a call on an index, it receives a premium and agrees that, prior to the expiration date, the purchaser of the call, upon exercise of the call, will receive from the Fund an amount of cash if the closing level of the index upon which the call is based is greater than the exercise price of the call. The amount of cash is equal to the difference between the closing price of the index and the exercise price of the call times a specified multiple (“multiplier”), which determines the total value for each point of such difference. When the Fund buys a call on an index, it pays a premium and has the same rights to such call as are indicated above. When the Fund buys a put on an index, it pays a premium and has the right, prior to the expiration date, to require the seller of the put, upon the Fund’s exercise of the put, to deliver to the Fund an amount of cash if the closing level of the index upon which the put is based is less than the exercise price of the put, which amount of cash is determined by the multiplier, as described above for calls. When the Fund writes a put on an index, it receives a premium and the purchaser of the put has the right, prior to the expiration date, to require the Fund to deliver to it an amount of cash equal to the difference between the closing level of the index and the exercise price times the multiplier if the closing level is less than the exercise price.

Risks of Options on Indices. If the Fund has purchased an index option and exercises it before the closing index value for that day is available, it runs the risk that the level of the underlying index may subsequently change. If such a change causes the exercised option to fall out-of-the-money, the Fund will be required to pay the difference between the closing index value and the exercise price of the option (times the applicable multiplier) to the assigned writer.

OTC Options. Unlike exchange-traded options, which are standardized with respect to the underlying instrument, expiration date, contract size and strike price, the terms of OTC options (options not traded on exchanges) generally are established through negotiation with the other party to the option contract. While this type of arrangement allows the Fund great flexibility to tailor the option to its needs, OTC options generally involve greater risk than exchange-traded options, which are guaranteed by the clearing organization of the exchanges where they are traded.

Futures Contracts and Options on Futures Contracts. A futures contract obligates the seller to deliver (and the purchaser to take delivery of) the specified security on the expiration date of the contract. An index futures contract obligates the seller to deliver (and the purchaser to take) an amount of cash equal to a specific dollar amount times the difference between the value of a specific index at the close of the last trading day of the contract and the price at which the agreement is made. No physical delivery of the underlying securities in the index is made.

When the Fund writes an option on a futures contract, it becomes obligated, in return for the premium paid, to assume a position in the futures contract at a specified exercise price at any time during the term of the option. If the Fund writes a call, it assumes a short futures position. If it writes a put, it assumes a long futures position. When the Fund purchases an option on a futures contract, it acquires the right in return for the premium it pays to

assume a position in a futures contract (a long position if the option is a call and a short position if the option is a put).

Whether the Fund realizes a gain or loss from futures activities depends upon movements in the underlying security or index. The extent of the Fund's loss from an unhedged short position in futures contracts or from writing unhedged call options on futures contracts is potentially unlimited. The Fund only purchases and sells futures contracts and options on futures contracts that are traded on a U.S. exchange or board of trade.

No price is paid upon entering into a futures contract. Instead, at the inception of a futures contract the Fund is required to deposit "initial margin" in an amount generally equal to 10% or less of the contract value. Margin also must be deposited when writing a call or put option on a futures contract, in accordance with applicable exchange rules. Unlike margin in securities transactions, initial margin does not represent a borrowing, but rather is in the nature of a performance bond or good-faith deposit that is returned to the Fund at the termination of the transaction if all contractual obligations have been satisfied. Under certain circumstances, such as periods of high volatility, the Fund may be required by an exchange to increase the level of its initial margin payment, and initial margin requirements might be increased generally in the future by regulatory action.

Subsequent "variation margin" payments are made to and from the futures commission merchant daily as the value of the futures position varies, a process known as "marking-to-market." Variation margin does not involve borrowing, but rather represents a daily settlement of the Fund's obligations to or from a futures commission merchant. When the Fund purchases an option on a futures contract, the premium paid plus transaction costs is all that is at risk. In contrast, when the Fund purchases or sells a futures contract or writes a call or put option thereon, it is subject to daily variation margin calls that could be substantial in the event of adverse price movements. If the Fund has insufficient cash to meet daily variation margin requirements, it might need to sell securities at a time when such sales are disadvantageous.

Purchasers and sellers of futures contracts and options on futures can enter into offsetting closing transactions, similar to closing transactions in options, by selling or purchasing, respectively, an instrument identical to the instrument purchased or sold. Positions in futures and options on futures contracts may be closed only on an exchange or board of trade that provides a secondary market. However, there can be no assurance that a liquid secondary market will exist for a particular contract at a particular time. In such event, it may not be possible to close a futures contract or options position.

Under certain circumstances, futures exchanges may establish daily limits on the amount that the price of a futures contract or an option on a futures contract can vary from the previous day's settlement price. Once that limit is reached, no trades may be made that day at a price beyond the limit. Daily price limits do not limit potential losses because prices could move to the daily limit for several consecutive days with little or no trading, thereby preventing liquidation of unfavorable positions.

If the Fund were unable to liquidate a futures contract or an option on a futures position due to the absence of a liquid secondary market or the imposition of price limits, it could incur substantial losses. The Fund would continue to be subject to market risk with respect to the position. In addition, except in the case of purchased options, the Fund would continue to be required to make daily variation margin payments and might be required to maintain cash or liquid assets in an account.

*Risks of Futures Contracts and Options Thereon.* The ordinary spreads between prices in the cash and futures markets (including the options on futures markets), due to differences in the natures of those markets, are subject to the following factors, which may create distortions. First, all participants in the futures market are subject to margin deposit and maintenance requirements. Rather than meeting additional margin deposit requirements, investors may close futures contracts through offsetting transactions, which could distort the normal relationships between the cash and futures markets. Second, the liquidity of the futures market depends on participants entering into offsetting transactions rather than making or taking delivery. To the extent participants decide to make or take



delivery, liquidity in the futures market could be reduced, thus producing distortion. Third, from the point of view of speculators, the deposit requirements in the futures market are less onerous than margin requirements in the securities market. Therefore, increased participation by speculators in the futures market may cause temporary price distortions.

*Combined Positions.* The Fund may purchase and write options in combination with each other. For example, the Fund may purchase a put option and write a call option on the same underlying instrument, in order to construct a combined position whose risk and return characteristics are similar to selling a futures contract. Another possible combined position would involve writing a call option at one strike price and buying a call option at a lower price, in order to reduce the risk of the written call option in the event of a substantial price increase. Because combined options positions involve multiple trades, they result in higher transaction costs and may be more difficult to open and close out.

### ***Publicly Traded Partnerships/Master Limited Partnerships***

The Fund may invest in publicly traded partnerships, including Master Limited Partnerships (“MLPs”). These are limited partnerships the interests in which (known as “units”) are traded on public exchanges, just like corporate stock. Such limited partnerships provide an investor with a direct interest in a group of assets (generally, oil and gas properties). Publicly traded partnership units typically trade publicly, like stock, and thus may provide the investor more liquidity than ordinary limited partnerships. Publicly traded partnerships are also called master limited partnerships and public limited partnerships. A limited partnership has one or more general partners (they may be individuals, corporations, partnerships or another entity) which manage the partnership, and limited partners, which provide capital to the partnership but have no role in its management. When an investor buys units in a publicly traded partnership, he or she becomes a limited partner. Publicly traded partnerships are formed in several ways. A non-traded partnership may decide to go public. Several non-traded partnerships may “roll up” into a single publicly traded partnership. A corporation may spin off a group of assets or part of its business into a partnership of which it is the general partner, either to realize what it believes to be the assets’ full value or as an alternative to issuing debt. A corporation may fully convert to a partnership, although since 1986 the tax consequences have made this unappealing; or, a newly formed company may operate as a publicly traded partnership from its inception.

There are different types of risks to investing in publicly traded partnerships including regulatory risks and interest rate risks. Currently most partnerships enjoy pass through taxation of their income to partners, which avoids double taxation of earnings. If the government were to change publicly traded partnerships business tax structure, unitholders would not be able to enjoy the relatively high yields in the sector for long. In addition, publicly traded partnerships which charge government-regulated fees for transportation of oil and gas products through their pipelines are subject to unfavorable changes in government-approved rates and fees, which would affect a publicly traded partnerships revenue stream negatively. Publicly traded partnerships also carry some interest rate risks. During increases in interest rates, publicly traded partnerships may not produce meaningful returns to shareholders.

### ***Real Estate Investment Trusts***

The Fund may invest in the securities of real estate investment trusts (“REITs”). REITs offer investors greater liquidity and diversification than direct ownership of properties. A REIT is a corporation or business trust that invests substantially all of its assets in interests in real estate. Equity REITs are those which purchase or lease land and buildings and generate income primarily from rental income. Equity REITs may also realize capital gains (or losses) when selling property that has appreciated (or depreciated) in value. Mortgage REITs are those that invest in real estate mortgages and generate income primarily from interest payments on mortgage loans. Hybrid REITs generally invest in both real property and mortgages. Unlike corporations, REITs do not pay income taxes if they meet certain IRS requirements. Real estate related equity securities also include those insured by real estate developers, companies with substantial real estate holdings (for investment or as part of their operations), as well as companies whose products and services are directly related to the real estate industry, such as building supply manufacturers, mortgage lenders or mortgage servicing companies. Like any investment in real estate, though, a REITs performance depends on several factors, such as its ability to find tenants, renew leases and finance property purchases and renovations. Other risks associated with REIT investments include the fact that equity and mortgage

REITs are dependent upon specialized management skills and are not fully diversified. These characteristics subject REITs to the risks associated with financing a limited number of projects. They are also subject to heavy cash flow dependency, defaults by borrowers, and self-liquidation. Additionally, equity REITs may be affected by any changes in the value of the underlying property owned by the trusts, and mortgage REITs may be affected by the quality of any credit extended. By investing in REITs indirectly through the Fund, a shareholder bears not only a proportionate share of the expenses of the Fund, but also may indirectly bear similar expenses of some of the REITs in which it invests.

### ***Temporary and Cash Investments***

Under normal market conditions, the Fund will stay fully invested according to its principal investment strategies as noted above. The Fund, however, may temporarily depart from its principal investment strategies by making short-term investments in cash, cash equivalents, and high-quality, short-term debt securities and money market instruments for temporary defensive purposes in response to adverse market, economic or political conditions, or other events (including, for example, terrorism, war, natural disasters and disease/virus epidemics). This may result in the Fund not achieving its investment objectives during that period.

For longer periods of time, the Fund may hold a substantial cash position. If the market advances during periods when the Fund is holding a large cash position, the Fund may not participate to the extent it would have if the Fund had been more fully invested. To the extent that the Fund uses a money market fund for its cash position, there will be some duplication of expenses because the Fund would bear its pro rata portion of such money market Fund's advisory fees and operational expenses.

The Fund may invest in any of the following securities and instruments:

*Money Market Mutual Fund.* The Fund may invest in money market mutual Fund in connection with its management of daily cash positions or as a temporary defensive measure. Generally, money market mutual Fund seek to earn income consistent with the preservation of capital and maintenance of liquidity. They primarily invest in high quality money market obligations, including securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government or its agencies and instrumentalities, bank obligations and high-grade corporate instruments. These investments generally mature within 397 days from the date of purchase. An investment in a money market mutual fund is not a bank deposit and is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any government agency. The Fund's investments in money market mutual Fund may be used for cash management purposes and to maintain liquidity in order to satisfy redemption requests or pay unanticipated expenses.

Your cost of investing in the Fund will generally be higher than the cost of investing directly in the underlying money market mutual fund shares. You will indirectly bear fees and expenses charged by the underlying money market mutual Fund in addition to the Fund's direct fees and expenses. Furthermore, the use of this strategy could affect the timing, amount and character of distributions to you and therefore may increase the amount of taxes payable by you.

*Bank Certificates of Deposit, Bankers' Acceptances and Time Deposits.* The Fund may acquire certificates of deposit, bankers' acceptances and time deposits. Certificates of deposit are negotiable certificates issued against monies deposited in a commercial bank for a definite period of time and earning a specified return. Bankers' acceptances are negotiable drafts or bills of exchange, normally drawn by an importer or exporter to pay for specific merchandise, which are "accepted" by a bank, meaning in effect that the bank unconditionally agrees to pay the face value of the instrument on maturity. Certificates of deposit and bankers' acceptances acquired by the Fund will be dollar-denominated obligations of domestic or foreign banks or financial institutions which at the time of purchase have capital, surplus and undivided profits in excess of \$100 million (including assets of both domestic and foreign branches), based on latest published reports, or less than \$100 million if the principal amount of such bank obligations are fully insured by the U.S. Government.

Domestic banks and foreign banks are subject to different governmental regulations with respect to the amount and types of loans that may be made and interest rates that may be charged. In addition, the profitability of the banking industry depends largely upon the availability and cost of funds for the purpose of financing lending operations under prevailing money market conditions. General economic conditions as well as exposure to credit losses arising from possible financial difficulties of borrowers play an important part in the operations of the banking industry.

As a result of federal and state laws and regulations, domestic banks are, among other things, required to maintain specified levels of reserves, limited in the amount which they can loan to a single borrower and subject to other regulations designed to promote financial soundness. However, such laws and regulations do not necessarily apply to foreign bank obligations that the Fund may acquire.

In addition to purchasing certificates of deposit and bankers' acceptances, to the extent permitted under the investment objective and policies stated above and in the Prospectus, the Fund may make interest-bearing time or other interest-bearing deposits in commercial or savings banks. Time deposits are non-negotiable deposits maintained at a banking institution for a specified period of time at a specified interest rate.

*Savings Association Obligations.* The Fund may invest in certificates of deposit (interest-bearing time deposits) issued by savings banks or savings and loan associations that have capital, surplus and undivided profits in excess of \$100 million, based on latest published reports, or less than \$100 million if the principal amount of such obligations is fully insured by the U.S. Government.

*Commercial Paper, Short-Term Notes and Other Corporate Obligations.* The Fund may invest a portion of its assets in commercial paper and short-term notes. Commercial paper consists of unsecured promissory notes issued by corporations. Issues of commercial paper and short-term notes will normally have maturities of less than nine months and fixed rates of return, although such instruments may have maturities of up to one year.

Commercial paper and short-term notes will consist of issues rated at the time of purchase "A-2" or higher by S&P, "Prime-1" or "Prime-2" by Moody's, or similarly rated by another nationally recognized statistical rating organization or, if unrated, will be determined by the Adviser to be of comparable quality.

Corporate obligations include bonds and notes issued by corporations to finance longer-term credit needs than supported by commercial paper. While such obligations generally have maturities of ten years or more, the Fund may purchase corporate obligations which have remaining maturities of one year or less from the date of purchase and which are rated "A" or higher by S&P or "A" or higher by Moody's.

#### ***Asset-Backed Securities***

The Fund may invest in certain types of asset-backed securities. Asset-backed securities are securities issued by trusts and special purpose entities that are backed by pools of assets, such as automobile and credit-card receivables and home equity loans, which pass through the payments on the underlying obligations to the security holders (less servicing fees paid to the originator or fees for any credit enhancement). Typically, the originator of the loan or accounts receivable paper transfers it to a specially created trust, which repackages it as securities with a minimum denomination and a specific term. The securities are then privately placed or publicly offered. Examples include certificates for automobile receivables and so-called plastic bonds, backed by credit card receivables.

The value of an asset-backed security is affected by, among other things, changes in the market's perception of the asset backing the security, the creditworthiness of the servicing agent for the loan pool, the originator of the loans and the financial institution providing any credit enhancement. Payments of principal and interest passed through to holders of asset-backed securities are frequently supported by some form of credit enhancement, such as a letter of credit, surety bond, limited guarantee by another entity or by having a priority to certain of the borrower's other assets. The degree of credit enhancement varies, and generally applies to only a portion of the asset-backed security's par value. Value is also affected if any credit enhancement has been exhausted.

### ***U.S. Government Obligations***

The Fund may invest in various types of U.S. Government obligations. U.S. Government obligations include securities issued or guaranteed as to principal and interest by the U.S. Government, its agencies or instrumentalities, such as the U.S. Treasury. U.S. Government obligations may include securities such as Treasury Inflation Protected Securities, or “TIPS.” Payment of principal and interest on U.S. Government obligations may be backed by the full faith and credit of the United States or may be backed solely by the issuing or guaranteeing agency or instrumentality itself. In the latter case, the investor must look principally to the agency or instrumentality issuing or guaranteeing the obligation for ultimate repayment, which agency or instrumentality may be privately owned. There can be no assurance that the U.S. Government would provide financial support to its agencies or instrumentalities (including government-sponsored enterprises) where it is not obligated to do so. See also “Mortgage-Backed Securities,” below.

### ***Mortgage-Backed Securities***

The Fund may invest in mortgage-backed securities. A mortgage-backed security is a type of pass-through security, which is a security representing pooled debt obligations repackaged as interests that pass income through an intermediary to investors. In the case of mortgage-backed securities, the ownership interest is in a pool of mortgage loans.

Mortgage-backed securities are most commonly issued or guaranteed by the Government National Mortgage Association (“GNMA”), Federal National Mortgage Association (“FNMA”), Federal Home Loan Banks (“FHLB”) or Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (“FHLMC”), but may also be issued or guaranteed by other private issuers. GNMA is a government-owned corporation that is an agency of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It guarantees, with the full faith and credit of the United States, full and timely payment of all monthly principal and interest on its mortgage-backed securities. FNMA is a publicly owned, government-sponsored corporation that mostly packages mortgages backed by the Federal Housing Administration, but also sells some non-governmentally backed mortgages. Pass-through securities issued by FNMA are guaranteed as to timely payment of principal and interest only by FNMA. The FHLMC is a publicly chartered agency that buys qualifying residential mortgages from lenders, re-packages them and provides certain guarantees. Pass-through securities issued by the FHLMC are guaranteed as to timely payment of principal and interest only by the FHLMC.

Some of these obligations are supported by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Treasury. Others are supported by the right of the issuer to borrow from the U.S. Treasury. Others are supported by the discretionary authority of the U.S. Government to purchase the agency’s obligations. Still others are supported only by the credit of the instrumentality. No assurance can be given that the U.S. Government would provide, or continue to provide, financial support to U.S. Government-sponsored instrumentalities if it is not obligated to do so by law. As a result, there is a risk that these entities will default on a financial obligation.

The U.S. Treasury has historically had the authority to purchase obligations of FNMA and FHLMC (collectively, the “GSEs”). However, in 2008, due to capitalization concerns, Congress provided the U.S. Treasury with additional authority to lend the GSEs emergency Fund and to purchase their stock. In September 2008, those capital concerns led the U.S. Treasury and the Federal Housing Finance Authority (“FHFA”) to announce that the GSEs had been placed in conservatorship.

Since that time, the GSEs have received significant capital support through U.S. Treasury preferred stock purchases as well as U.S. Treasury and Federal Reserve purchases of their mortgage backed securities (“MBS”). While the MBS purchase programs ended in 2010, the U.S. Treasury announced in December 2009 that it would continue its support for the entities’ capital as necessary to prevent a negative net worth. However, no assurance can be given that the Federal Reserve, U.S. Treasury, or FHFA initiatives will ensure that the GSEs will remain successful in meeting their obligations with respect to the debt and MBS they issue into the future.

In 2012 the FHFA initiated a strategic plan to develop a program of credit risk transfer intended to reduce Fannie Mae's and Freddie Mac's overall risk through the creation of credit risk transfer assets ("CRTs"). CRTs come in two primary series: Structured Agency Credit Risk ("STACRs") for Freddie Mac and Connecticut Avenue Securities ("CAS") for Fannie Mae, although other series may be developed in the future. CRTs are typically structured as unsecured general obligations of the GSEs and their cash flows are based on the performance of a pool of reference loans. Unlike traditional residential MBS securities, bond payments typically do not come directly from the underlying mortgages and are instead remitted by the GSEs to CRT investors. CRTs are typically floating rate securities and may have multiple tranches with losses first allocated to the most junior or subordinate tranche and this structure results in increased sensitivity to dramatic housing downturns, especially for the subordinate tranches. Many CRTs also have collateral performance triggers (e.g., based on credit enhancement, delinquencies or defaults, etc.) that could shut off principal payments to subordinate tranches. Generally, GSEs are required to buy back all of the CRT tranches at par in 10 years.

In addition, the future of the GSEs is in serious question as the U.S. Government is considering multiple options, ranging on a spectrum from significant reform, nationalization, privatization, consolidation, or abolishment of the entities. Congress is considering several pieces of legislation that would reform the GSEs, proposing to address their structure, mission, portfolio limits, and guarantee fees, among other issues.

The FHFA and the U.S. Treasury (through its agreement to purchase GSE preferred stock) have imposed strict limits on the size of GSEs' mortgage portfolios. In August 2012, the U.S. Treasury amended its preferred stock purchase agreements to provide that the GSEs' portfolios will be wound down at an annual rate of 15 percent (up from the previously agreed annual rate of 10 percent), requiring the GSEs to reach the \$250 billion target by December 31, 2018. In 2017, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac reduced their mortgage portfolios appropriately and, as a result, each met the December 31, 2017 portfolio targets of \$288 billion. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are also now below the \$250 billion cap for year-end 2018.

Mortgage-backed securities may have either fixed or adjustable interest rates. Tax or regulatory changes may adversely affect the mortgage securities market. In addition, changes in the market's perception of the issuer may affect the value of mortgage-backed securities. The rate of return on mortgage-backed securities may be affected by prepayments of principal on the underlying loans, which generally increase as market interest rates decline; as a result, when interest rates decline, holders of these securities normally do not benefit from appreciation in market value to the same extent as holders of other non-callable debt securities.

Because many mortgages are repaid early, the actual maturity and duration of mortgage backed securities are typically shorter than their stated final maturity and their duration calculated solely on the basis of the stated life and payment schedule. In calculating its dollar weighted average maturity and duration, the Fund may apply certain industry conventions regarding the maturity and duration of mortgage-backed instruments. Different analysts use different models and assumptions in making these determinations. The Fund uses an approach that the Manager believes is reasonable in light of all relevant circumstances. If this determination is not borne out in practice, it could positively or negatively affect the value of the Fund when market interest rates change. Increasing market interest rates generally extend the effective maturities of mortgage-backed securities, increasing their sensitivity to interest rate changes.

Collateralized mortgage obligations (“CMOs”) are debt obligations collateralized by mortgage loans or mortgage pass-through securities (collateral collectively hereinafter referred to as “Mortgage Assets”). Multi-class pass-through securities are interests in a trust composed of Mortgage Assets and all references in this section to CMOs include multi-class pass-through securities. Principal prepayments on the Mortgage Assets may cause the CMOs to be retired substantially earlier than their stated maturities or final distribution dates, resulting in a loss of all or part of the premium if any has been paid. Interest is paid or accrues on all classes of the CMOs on a monthly, quarterly or semiannual basis. The principal and interest payments on the Mortgage Assets may be allocated among the various classes of CMOs in several ways. Typically, payments of principal, including any prepayments, on the underlying mortgages are applied to the classes in the order of their respective stated maturities or final distribution dates, so that no payment of principal is made on CMOs of a class until all CMOs of other classes having earlier stated maturities or final distribution dates have been paid in full.

Stripped mortgage-backed securities (“SMBS”) are derivative multi-class mortgage securities. The Fund will only invest in SMBS whose mortgage assets are U.S. Government obligations and are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government. SMBS are usually structured with two classes that receive different proportions of the interest and principal distributions from a pool of mortgage assets. A common type of SMBS will be structured so that one class receives some of the interest and most of the principal from the mortgage assets, while the other class receives most of the interest and the remainder of the principal. If the underlying mortgage assets experience greater than anticipated prepayments of principal, the Fund may fail to fully recoup its initial investment in these securities. The market value of any class which consists primarily or entirely of principal payments is generally unusually volatile in response to changes in interest rates.

Investment in mortgage-backed securities poses several risks, including among others, prepayment, market and credit risk. Prepayment risk reflects the risk that borrowers may prepay their mortgages faster than expected, thereby affecting the investment’s average life and perhaps its yield. Whether a mortgage loan is prepaid is almost entirely controlled by the borrower. Borrowers are most likely to exercise prepayment options at the time when it is least advantageous to investors, generally prepaying mortgages as interest rates fall, and slowing payments as interest rates rise. Besides the effect of prevailing interest rates, the rate of prepayment and refinancing of mortgages may also be affected by home value appreciation, ease of the refinancing process and local economic conditions. Market risk reflects the risk that the price of a security may fluctuate over time. The price of mortgage-backed securities may be particularly sensitive to prevailing interest rates, the length of time the security is expected to be outstanding and the liquidity of the issue. In a period of unstable interest rates, there may be decreased demand for certain types of mortgage-backed securities, and the Fund, to the extent that it is invested in such securities and desires to sell them, may find it difficult to find a buyer, which may in turn decrease the price at which they may be sold. Credit risk reflects the risk that the Fund may not receive all or part of its principal because the issuer or credit enhancer has defaulted on its obligations. Obligations issued by U.S. Government-related entities are guaranteed as to the payment of principal and interest, but are not backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government. However, as described above, the U.S. Government has taken steps with respect to FNMA and FHLMC to ensure that they are able to fulfill their financial obligations. The performance of private label mortgage-backed securities, issued by private institutions, is based on the financial health of those institutions. With respect to GNMA certificates, although GNMA guarantees timely payment even if homeowners delay or default, tracking the “pass-through” payments may, at times, be difficult.

### ***Repurchase Agreements***

The Fund may invest in repurchase agreements fully collateralized by obligations issued by the U.S. government or agencies of the U.S. government (“U.S. Government Obligations”). A repurchase agreement is a short term investment in which the purchaser (i.e., the Fund) acquires ownership of a U.S. Government Obligation (which may be of any maturity) and the seller agrees to repurchase the obligation at a future time at a set price, thereby determining the yield during the purchaser's holding period (usually not more than 7 days from the date of purchase). Any repurchase transaction in which the Fund engages will require full collateralization of the seller's obligation during the entire term of the repurchase agreement. In the event of a bankruptcy or other default of the seller, the Fund could experience both delays in liquidating the underlying security and losses in value. However,

the Fund intends to enter into repurchase agreements only with the custodian, other banks with assets of \$1 billion or more and registered securities dealers determined by the Advisor to be creditworthy. The Advisor monitors the creditworthiness of the banks and securities dealers with which the Fund engages in repurchase transactions.

### ***Restricted Securities***

The Fund may invest in securities that are subject to restrictions on resale because they have not been registered under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”). These securities are sometimes referred to as private placements. Although securities that may be resold only to “qualified institutional buyers” in accordance with the provisions of Rule 144A under the Securities Act are technically considered “restricted securities,” the Fund may purchase Rule 144A securities without regard to the limitation on investments in illiquid securities described below in the “Illiquid Securities” section, provided that a determination is made that such securities have a readily available trading market. The Fund may also purchase certain commercial paper issued in reliance on the exemption from registration in Section 4(2) of the Securities Act (“4(2) Paper”). The Adviser will determine the liquidity of Rule 144A securities and 4(2) Paper under the supervision of the Board of Trustees. The liquidity of Rule 144A securities and 4(2) Paper will be monitored by the Adviser, and if as a result of changed conditions it is determined that a Rule 144A security or 4(2) Paper is no longer liquid, the Fund’s holdings of illiquid securities will be reviewed to determine what, if any, action is required to assure that the Fund does not exceed its applicable percentage limitation for investments in illiquid securities.

Limitations on the resale of restricted securities may have an adverse effect on the marketability of portfolio securities and the Fund might be unable to dispose of restricted securities promptly or at reasonable prices and might thereby experience difficulty satisfying redemption requirements. The Fund might also have to register such restricted securities in order to dispose of them, resulting in additional expense and delay. Adverse market conditions could impede such a public offering of securities.

### ***When-Issued Securities***

The Fund may from time to time purchase securities on a “when-issued” basis. The price of such securities, which may be expressed in yield terms, is fixed at the time the commitment to purchase is made, but delivery and payment for the when-issued securities take place at a later date. Normally, the settlement date occurs within one month of the purchase. During the period between purchase and settlement, the Fund makes no payment to the issuer and no interest accrues to the Fund. To the extent that assets of the Fund are held in cash pending the settlement of a purchase of securities, the Fund would earn no income. While when-issued securities may be sold prior to the settlement date, the Fund intends to purchase such securities with the purpose of actually acquiring them unless a sale appears desirable for investment reasons. At the time the Fund makes the commitment to purchase a security on a when-issued basis, it will record the transaction and reflect the value of the security in determining its net asset value. The market value of the when-issued securities may be more or less than the purchase price. The Fund does not believe that its net asset value or income will be adversely affected by the purchase of securities on a when-issued basis. The Fund will segregate liquid assets equal in value to commitments for when-issued securities, which may reduce but does not eliminate leverage.

### ***Illiquid Securities***

As a non-principal strategy, the Fund may invest up to 15% of its net assets in securities that are illiquid at the time of purchase, which means that there may be legal or contractual restrictions on their disposition, or that there are no readily available market quotations for such a security. Illiquid securities present the risks that the Fund may have difficulty valuing these holdings and/or may be unable to sell these holdings at the time or price desired. There are generally no restrictions on the Fund’s ability to invest in restricted securities (that is, securities that are not registered pursuant to the Securities Act), except to the extent such securities may be considered illiquid. Securities issued pursuant to Rule 144A of the Securities Act will be considered liquid if determined to be so under procedures adopted by the Board of Trustees. The Adviser is responsible for making the determination as to the liquidity of restricted securities (pursuant to the procedures adopted by the Board of Trustees). The Fund will determine a security to be illiquid if it cannot be sold or disposed of in the ordinary course of business within seven days at the value at which the Fund has valued the security. Factors considered in determining whether a security is illiquid

may include, but are not limited to: the frequency of trades and quotes for the security; the number of dealers willing to purchase and sell the security and the number of potential purchasers; the number of dealers who undertake to make a market in the security; the nature of the security, including whether it is registered or unregistered, and the market place; whether the security has been rated by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization (“NRSRO”); the period of time remaining until the maturity of a debt instrument or until the principal amount of a demand instrument can be recovered through demand; the nature of any restrictions on resale; and with respect to municipal lease obligations and certificates of participation, there is reasonable assurance that the obligation will remain liquid throughout the time the obligation is held and, if unrated, an analysis similar to that which would be performed by an NRSRO is performed. If a restricted security is determined to be liquid, it will not be included within the category of illiquid securities, which may not exceed 15% of the Fund’s net assets. Investing in Rule 144A securities could have the effect of increasing the level of the Fund’s illiquidity to the extent that the Fund, at a particular point in time may be unable to find qualified institutional buyers interested in purchasing the securities. The Fund is permitted to sell restricted securities to qualified institutional buyers.

## **Additional Risks.**

### ***Risks Associated With Recent Market Events***

The Fund could lose money over short periods due to short-term market movements and over longer periods during more prolonged market downturns. The value of a security or other instrument may decline due to changes in general market conditions, economic trends or events that are not specifically related to the issuer of the security or other instrument, or factors that affect a particular issuer or issuers, country, group of countries, region, market, industry, group of industries, sector or asset class. During a general market downturn, multiple asset classes may be negatively affected. Changes in market conditions and interest rates generally do not have the same impact on all types of securities and instruments.

Stresses associated with the 2008 financial crisis in the United States and global economies peaked approximately a decade ago, but periods of unusually high volatility in the financial markets and restrictive credit conditions, sometimes limited to a particular sector or a geography, continue to recur. Some countries, including the United States, have adopted and/or are considering the adoption of more protectionist trade policies, a move away from the tighter financial industry regulations that followed the financial crisis, and/or substantially reducing corporate taxes. The exact shape of these policies is still being considered, but the equity and debt markets may react strongly to expectations of change, which could increase volatility, especially if the market’s expectations are not borne out. A rise in protectionist trade policies, and the possibility of changes to some international trade agreements, could affect the economies of many nations in ways that cannot necessarily be foreseen at the present time. In addition, geopolitical and other risks, including environmental and public health, may add to instability in world economies and markets generally. Economies and financial markets throughout the world are becoming increasingly interconnected. As a result, whether or not the Fund invest in securities of issuers located in or with significant exposure to countries experiencing economic, political and/or financial difficulties, the value and liquidity of the Fund’s investments may be negatively affected by such events.

An outbreak of infectious respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 was first detected in China in December 2019 and has now been detected globally. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced that it had made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic. COVID-19 has resulted in travel restrictions, closed international borders, enhanced health screenings at ports of entry and elsewhere, disruption of and delays in healthcare service preparation and delivery, prolonged quarantines, cancellations, business and school closings, supply chain disruptions, and lower consumer demand, as well as general concern and uncertainty. The impact of COVID-19, and other infectious illness outbreaks that may arise in the future, could adversely affect the economies of many nations or the entire global economy, individual issuers and capital markets in ways that cannot necessarily be foreseen. In addition, the impact of infectious illnesses in emerging market countries may be greater due to generally less established healthcare systems. Public health crises caused by the COVID-19 outbreak may exacerbate other pre-existing political, social and economic risks in certain countries



or globally. The duration of the COVID-19 outbreak and its effects cannot be determined with certainty. The value of the Fund and the securities in which the Fund invest may be adversely affected by impacts caused by COVID-19 and other epidemics and pandemics that may arise in the future.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and corresponding events in late February 2022, have had, and could continue to have, severe adverse effects on regional and global economic markets for securities and commodities. Following Russia's actions, various governments, including the United States, have issued broad-ranging economic sanctions against Russia, including, among other actions, a prohibition on doing business with certain Russian companies, large financial institutions, officials and oligarchs; the removal by certain countries and the European Union of selected Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications ("SWIFT"), the electronic banking network that connects banks globally; and restrictive measures to prevent the Russian Central Bank from undermining the impact of the sanctions. The current events, including sanctions and the potential for future sanctions, including any impacting Russia's energy sector, and other actions, and Russia's retaliatory responses to those sanctions and actions, may continue to adversely impact the Russian economy and may result in the further decline of the value and liquidity of Russian securities, a continued weakening of the ruble and continued exchange closures, and may have other adverse consequences on the Russian economy that could impact the value of Russian investments and impair the ability of the Fund to buy, sell, receive or deliver those securities. Moreover, those events have, and could continue to have, an adverse effect on global markets performance and liquidity, thereby negatively affecting the value of the Fund's investments beyond any direct exposure to Russian issuers. The duration of ongoing hostilities and the vast array of sanctions and related events cannot be predicted. Those events present material uncertainty and risk with respect to markets globally and the performance of the Fund and its investments or operations could be negatively impacted.

### ***Europe Recent Events Risk.***

A number of countries in Europe have experienced severe economic and financial difficulties. Many non-governmental issuers, and even certain governments, have defaulted on, or been forced to restructure, their debts; many other issuers have faced difficulties obtaining credit or refinancing existing obligations; financial institutions have in many cases required government or central bank support, have needed to raise capital, and/or have been impaired in their ability to extend credit; and financial markets in Europe and elsewhere have experienced extreme volatility and declines in asset values and liquidity. These difficulties may continue, worsen or spread within and beyond Europe. Responses to the financial problems by European governments, central banks and others, including austerity measures and reforms, may not work, may result in social unrest and may limit future growth and economic recovery or have other unintended consequences. Further defaults or restructurings by governments and others of their debt could have additional adverse effects on economies, financial markets and asset valuations around the world. In addition, the United Kingdom ("UK") has formally withdrawn from the European Union ("EU") and one or more other countries may withdraw from the EU and/or abandon the Euro, the common currency of the EU. The UK and EU reached an agreement effective January 1, 2021 on the terms of their future trading relationship relating to the trading of goods, however, this does not cover financial services. The Fund may face risks associated with the potential uncertainty and consequences of the new relationship between the UK and EU, including volatility in exchange and interest rates and politically divergent national laws and regulations. Ukraine has experienced ongoing military conflict; this conflict may expand and military attacks could occur elsewhere in Europe. Europe has also been struggling with mass migration from the Middle East and Africa. The impact of these actions, especially if they occur in a disorderly fashion, is not clear but could be significant and far-reaching. Whether or not the Fund invests in securities of issuers located in Europe or with significant exposure to European issuers or countries, these events could negatively affect the value and relative liquidity of the Fund's investments. The occurrence of terrorist incidents throughout Europe could also impact financial markets.

### **Government Intervention in Financial Markets Risk**

Instability in the financial markets may lead the U.S. government and foreign governments to take a number of unprecedented actions designed to support certain financial institutions and segments of the financial markets that

may experience extreme volatility, and in some cases a lack of liquidity. U.S. federal and state governments and foreign governments, their regulatory agencies or self-regulatory organizations may take additional actions that affect the regulation of the securities in which the Fund invests, or the issuers of such securities, in ways that are unforeseeable. Issuers of corporate securities might seek protection under the bankruptcy laws. Legislation or regulation may also change the way in which the Fund itself is regulated. Such legislation or regulation could limit or preclude the Fund's ability to achieve its investment objective.

## **Investment Limitations**

***Fundamental.*** The Trust (on behalf of the Fund) has adopted the following restrictions as fundamental policies, which may not be changed without the favorable vote of the holders of a "majority of the outstanding voting securities of a Fund," as defined in the 1940 Act. Under the 1940 Act, the "vote of the holders of a majority of the outstanding voting securities" means the vote of the holders of the lesser of (i) 67% of the shares of the Fund represented at a meeting at which the holders of more than 50% of its outstanding shares are represented or (ii) more than 50% of the outstanding shares of the Fund.

The Fund may not:

1. **Borrowing Money.** The Fund will not borrow money, except: (a) from a bank, provided that immediately after such borrowing there is an asset coverage of 300% for all borrowings of the Fund; or (b) from a bank or other persons for temporary purposes only, provided that such temporary borrowings are in an amount not exceeding 5% of the Fund's total assets at the time when the borrowing is made. This limitation does not preclude the Fund from entering into reverse repurchase transactions, provided that the Fund has an asset coverage of 300% for all borrowings and repurchase commitments of the Fund pursuant to reverse repurchase transactions.
2. **Senior Securities.** The Fund will not issue senior securities. This limitation is not applicable to activities that may be deemed to involve the issuance or sale of a senior security by the Fund, provided that the Fund's engagement in such activities is consistent with or permitted by the 1940 Act, the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder or interpretations of the SEC or its staff.
3. **Underwriting.** The Fund will not act as underwriter of securities issued by other persons. This limitation is not applicable to the extent that, in connection with the disposition of portfolio securities (including restricted securities), the Fund may be deemed an underwriter under certain federal securities laws.
4. **Real Estate.** The Fund will not purchase or sell real estate. This limitation is not applicable to investments in marketable securities which are secured by or represent interests in real estate. This limitation does not preclude the Fund from investing in mortgage-related securities or investing in companies engaged in the real estate business or that have a significant portion of their assets in real estate (including real estate investment trusts).
5. **Commodities.** The Fund will not purchase or sell commodities unless acquired as a result of ownership of securities or other investments. This limitation does not preclude the Fund from purchasing or selling options or futures contracts, from investing in securities or other instruments backed by commodities or from investing in companies which are engaged in a commodities business or have a significant portion of their assets in commodities.
6. **Loans.** The Fund will not make loans to other persons, except: (a) by loaning portfolio securities; (b) by engaging in repurchase agreements; or (c) by purchasing nonpublicly offered debt securities. For purposes of this limitation, the term "loans" shall not include the purchase of a portion of an issue of publicly distributed bonds, debentures or other securities.

7. Concentration. The Fund will not invest 25% or more of its total assets in a particular industry. This limitation is not applicable to investments in obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government, its agencies and instrumentalities or repurchase agreements with respect thereto.

With respect to the percentages adopted by the Trust as maximum limitations on its investment policies and limitations, an excess above the fixed percentage will not be a violation of the policy or limitation unless the excess results immediately and directly from the acquisition of any security or the action taken. This paragraph does not apply to the borrowing policy set forth in paragraph 1 above.

Notwithstanding any of the foregoing limitations, any investment company, whether organized as a trust, association or corporation, or a personal holding company, may be merged or consolidated with or acquired by the Trust, provided that if such merger, consolidation or acquisition results in an investment in the securities of any issuer prohibited by said paragraphs, the Trust shall, within ninety days after the consummation of such merger, consolidation or acquisition, dispose of all of the securities of such issuer so acquired or such portion thereof as shall bring the total investment therein within the limitations imposed by said paragraphs above as of the date of consummation.

***Non-Fundamental.*** The following lists the non-fundamental investment restrictions applicable to the Fund. These restrictions can be changed by the Board of Trustees, but the change will only be effective after notice is given to shareholders of the Fund.

The Fund may not:

1. Pledging. The Fund will not mortgage, pledge, hypothecate or in any manner transfer, as security for indebtedness, any assets of the Fund except as may be necessary in connection with borrowings described in limitation (1) above. Margin deposits, security interests, liens and collateral arrangements with respect to transactions involving options, futures contracts, short sales and other permitted investments and techniques are not deemed to be a mortgage, pledge or hypothecation of assets for purposes of this limitation.; or
2. Borrowing. The Fund will not purchase any security while borrowings (including reverse repurchase agreements) representing more than one third of its total assets are outstanding.; or
3. Margin Purchases. The Fund will not purchase securities or evidences of interest thereon on "margin." This limitation is not applicable to short term credit obtained by the Fund for the clearance of purchases and sales or redemption of securities, or to arrangements with respect to transactions involving options, futures contracts, short sales and other permitted investments and techniques; or
4. Options. The Fund will not purchase or sell puts, calls, options or straddles, except as described in the Statement of Additional Information; or
5. Illiquid Investments. The Fund will not invest more than 15% of its net assets in securities for which there are legal or contractual restrictions on resale and other illiquid securities; or
6. 80% Investment Policy. Under normal circumstances, at least 80% of the Fund's assets (defined as net assets plus the amount of any borrowing for investment purposes) will be invested in small capitalization companies. The Fund will not change this policy unless the Fund's shareholders are provided with at least 60 days prior written notice.

Except with respect to borrowing and illiquid securities, if a percentage or rating restriction on investment or use of assets set forth herein or in the Prospectus is adhered to at the time a transaction is affected, later changes in percentage resulting from any cause other than actions by the Fund will not be considered a violation.

## **Management of the Fund**

### **Board of Trustees**

The management and affairs of the Fund are supervised by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees consists of five individuals, all of whom are not “interested persons” (as defined under the 1940 Act) of the Trust and the Adviser (“Independent Trustees”). The Trustees are fiduciaries for the Fund’s shareholders and are governed by the laws of the State of Delaware in this regard. The Board of Trustees establishes policies for the operation of the Fund and appoints the officers who conduct the daily business of the Fund.

### **Board Leadership Structure**

The Trust is led by Mr. Brian Nielsen, who has served as the Chairman of the Board since 2011. The Board of Trustees is comprised of Mr. Nielsen and four (4) other Independent Trustees. Under certain 1940 Act governance guidelines that apply to the Trust, the Independent Trustees will meet in executive session, at least quarterly. Under the Trust’s Agreement and Declaration of Trust and By-Laws, the Chairman of the Board is responsible for (a) presiding at board meetings, (b) calling special meetings on an as-needed basis, (c) setting the agendas for board meetings and (d) ensuring board members are provided necessary materials in advance of each board meeting. The Trust believes that (i) its Chairman, (ii) Keith Rhoades, the independent chair of the Audit Committee, and, (iii) as an entity, the full Board of Trustees, provide effective leadership that is in the best interests of the Trust, each of its Fund and each shareholder.

In accordance with the fund governance standards prescribed by the SEC under the 1940 Act, the Independent Trustees on the Nominating Committee select and nominate all candidates for Independent Trustee positions. Each Trustee was appointed to serve on the Board of Trustees because of his experience, qualifications, attributes and/or skills. The Board of Trustees reviews its leadership structure regularly on at least an annual basis. The Board of Trustees believes that the structure described above facilitates the orderly and efficient flow of information to the Trustees from the officers of the Trust, the advisers of the Fund that comprise the Trust and other service providers, and facilitates the effective evaluation of the risks and other issues, including conflicts of interest, that may impact the Trust as a whole as well as the Fund individually. The Board of Trustees believes that the orderly and efficient flow of information and the ability of the Board of Trustees to bring each Trustee’s experience and skills to bear in overseeing the Trust’s operations is important given the characteristics and circumstances of the Trust, including: the unaffiliated nature of each investment adviser and the fund(s) managed by such adviser; the number of Fund that comprise the Trust; the variety of asset classes that those Fund reflect; the net assets of the Trust; the committee structure of the Trust; and the independent arrangements of each of the Trust’s series. For these reasons, the Board of Trustees believes that its leadership structure is appropriate.

### **Board Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees’ role is one of oversight rather than day-to-day management of any of the Trust’s series. The Trust’s Audit Committee assists with this oversight function. The Board of Trustees’ oversight extends to the Trust’s risk management processes. Those processes are overseen by Trust officers, including the President, the Treasurer, the Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer (“CCO”), who regularly report to the Board of Trustees on a variety of matters at Board meetings.

### **Board Risk Oversight.**

The Board of Trustees is comprised of Mr. Nielsen and four (4) other Independent Trustees with a standing independent Audit Committee with a separate chair. The Board is responsible for overseeing risk management, and the full Board regularly engages in discussions of risk management and receives compliance reports that inform its oversight of risk management from its CCO at quarterly meetings and on an ad hoc basis, when and if necessary. The Audit Committee considers financial and reporting risk within its area of responsibilities. Generally, the Board believes that its oversight of material risks is adequately maintained through the compliance-reporting chain where the CCO is the primary recipient and communicator of such risk-related information and oversees the Trust's service providers' adherence to the Trust's policies and procedures.

Investment advisers managing the Trust's series report to the Trust's CCO and the Board of Trustees, on a regular and as-needed basis, on actual and possible risks affecting the Trust's series. These investment advisers report to the CCO and the Board of Trustees on various elements of risk, including investment, credit, liquidity, valuation, operational and compliance risks, as well as any overall business risks that could impact the Trust's series.

The Board of Trustees has appointed the CCO, who reports directly to the Board of Trustees and who participates in its regular meetings. In addition, the CCO conducts on-going and continuous compliance testing and presents an annual report to the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Trust's compliance policies and procedures. The CCO, together with the Trust's President, Treasurer and Secretary, regularly discusses risk issues affecting the Trust and its series during Board of Trustee meetings. The CCO also provides updates to the Board of Trustees on the operation of the Trust's compliance policies and procedures and on how these procedures are designed to mitigate risk. Finally, the CCO and/or other officers of the Trust report to the Board of Trustees in the event that any material risk issues arise in between Board meetings.

### **Trustee Qualifications.**

Generally, the Trust believes that each Trustee is competent to serve because of their individual overall merits including: (i) experience, (ii) qualifications, (iii) attributes and (iv) skills. Mr. Nielsen has over twenty years of experience in the investment management and brokerage business including a focus in compliance, legal and regulatory oversight and possesses a strong understanding of the regulatory framework under which investment companies must operate. Since 2010, Thomas Sarkany has been the President of TTS Consultants, LLC, and since December 2022 has been the President of TTS Associates, Inc., each a financial services firm and from 1994 through 2010, held various roles at Value Line, Inc. (a publicly held company providing financial research, publications and money management services to retail and institutional investors), including Director of Marketing and Asset Management, Director of Index Licensing, and member of the Board of Directors. Anthony Lewis has been Chairman and CEO of The Lewis Group USA, an executive consulting firm, for the past ten years, and also serves as a Director, the Chairman of the Compensation Committee, and a Member of the Audit Committee of Torotel Inc., and also serves as a Trustee, the Chairman of the Valuation Committee, and a Member of the Audit Committee of the Wildermuth Endowment Fund, a registered closed-end fund operating as an interval fund. Keith Rhoades held various accounting roles at Union Pacific Railroad, including Senior Director of General Ledger/Financial Research. Randy Skalla has more than 20 years of investment management experience including serving as President of L5 Enterprises, Inc. since 2001 and from 2001 through 2017 Mr. Skalla was a member of the Orizon Investment Counsel Board. The Trust does not believe any one factor is determinative in assessing a Trustee's qualifications, but that the collective experience of each Trustee makes them each highly qualified.

The Board of Trustees has established three standing board committees – the Audit Committee, the Compensation Committee and the Nominating Committee. All Independent Trustees are members of the Audit Committee, Compensation Committee and the Nominating Committee (“Standing Board Committees”). Inclusion of all Independent Trustees as members of all three of the Standing Board Committees allows all such Trustees to participate in the full range of the Board of Trustees' oversight duties, including oversight of risk management processes.

**Trustees and Officers**

The Trustees and the officers of the Trust are listed below with their addresses, present positions with the Trust and principal occupations over at least the last five years. The business address of each Trustee and Officer is 225 Pictoria Drive, Suite 450, Cincinnati, OH 45246. All correspondence to the Trustees and Officers should be directed to c/o Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC, P.O. Box 541150, Omaha, Nebraska 68154.

**Independent Trustees**

Name, Address and Year of Birth	Position/Term of Office*	Principal Occupation During the Past Five Years	Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee**	Other Directorships held by Trustee During the Past Five Years
Brian Nielsen 1972	Trustee since May 2011	Trustee of Northern Lights Fund Trust II (since 2011); Special Projects Counsel of NorthStar Financial Services Group, LLC (from 2018 to 2019); Secretary of CLS Investments, LLC (from 2001 to 2018); Secretary of Orion Advisor Services, LLC (from 2001 to 2018); Manager (from 2012 to 2015), General Counsel and Secretary (from 2003 to 2018) of NorthStar Financial Services Group, LLC; CEO (from 2012 to 2018), Secretary (from 2003 to 2018) and Manager (from 2005 to 2018) of Northern Lights Distributors, LLC; Director, Secretary and General Counsel of Constellation Trust Company (from 2004 to 2018); CEO (from 2015 to 2018), Manager (from 2008 to 2015), General Counsel and Secretary (from 2011 to 2018) of Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC; General Counsel and Secretary of Blu Giant, LLC (from 2011 to 2018); Secretary of Gemini Fund Services, LLC (from 2012 to 2018); Manager of Arbor Point Advisors, LLC (from 2012 to 2018); Secretary and General Counsel of NorthStar Holdings, LLC (from 2013 to 2015); Director, Secretary and General Counsel	5	Manager of Northern Lights Distributors, LLC (from 2005 to 2018); Manager of NorthStar Financial Services Group, LLC (from 2012 to 2015); Manager of Arbor Point Advisors, LLC (from 2012 to 2018); Director of Constellation Trust Company (from 2004 to 2018)

		of NorthStar CTC Holdings, Inc. (from 2015 to 2018) and Secretary and Chief Legal Officer of AdvisorOne Fund (from 2003 to 2018).		
Thomas T. Sarkany 1946	Trustee since October 2011	President, TTS Consultants, LLC (since 2010) (financial services firm); President of TTS Associates, Inc. (since December 2022) (financial services firm).	5	Trustee, Arrow ETF Trust; Trustee, Arrow Investments Trust; Trustee, Northern Lights Fund Trust IV
Anthony H. Lewis 1946	Trustee since May 2011	Chairman and CEO of The Lewis Group USA (since 2007) (executive consulting firm).	5	Director, Member of the Compensation Committee and Member of the Risk Committee of Torotel Inc. (Magnetics, Aerospace and Defense), Trustee, Chairman of the Fair Valuation Committee and Member of the Audit Committee of the Wildermuth Endowment Strategy Fund
Keith Rhoades 1948	Trustee since May 2011	Retired since 2008.	5	NONE
Randy Skalla 1962	Trustee since May 2011	President, L5 Enterprises, Inc. (since 2001) (financial services company).	5	NONE

***Officers***

Name, Address and Year of Birth	Position/Term of Office*	Principal Occupation During the Past Five Years	Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee**	Other Directorships held by Trustee During the Past Five Years
Kevin Wolf 1969	President since January 2013	Vice President of The Ultimus Group, LLC and Executive Vice President, Head of Fund Administration and Product of Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC	N/A	N/A

		(formerly, Gemini Fund Services, LLC) (since 2019), President, Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC (formerly, Gemini Fund Services, LLC) (2012 - 2019).		
Eric Kane 1981	Secretary since August 2022	Vice President and Managing Counsel, Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC (since 2020); Vice President and Counsel, Gemini Fund Services, LLC (2017-2020)	N/A	N/A
Erik Naviloff 1968	Treasurer since January 2013	Vice President of Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC (formerly, Gemini Fund Services, LLC) (since 2012).	N/A	N/A
Jared Lahman 1986	Anti-Money Laundering Officer since January 2022	Compliance Analyst, Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC (since January 2019); Manager, Fund Accounting, Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC (formerly, Gemini Fund Services, LLC) (January 2014 to December 2018).	N/A	N/A
Emile Molineaux 1962	Chief Compliance Officer and Anti-Money Laundering Officer since May 2011	Senior Compliance Officer and CCO of various clients of Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC (since 2011).	N/A	N/A

\* The term of office for each Trustee and Officer listed above will continue indefinitely.

\*\*As of December 31, 2022, the Trust was comprised of 19 active portfolios managed by unaffiliated investment advisers. The term “Fund Complex” applies only to the North Star Small Cap Value Fund, North Star Bond Fund, North Star Dividend Fund, North Star Microcap Fund and the North Star Opportunity Fund and not to any other series of the Trust. The Funds do not hold themselves out as related to any other series within the Trust for investment purposes, nor do they share the same investment adviser with any other series not included in the Fund Complex.

## Board Committees

Audit Committee. The Board has an Audit Committee, which is comprised of the Independent Trustees. The Audit Committee reviews financial statements and other audit-related matters for the Fund. The Audit Committee also holds discussions with management and with the Fund’s independent auditor concerning the scope of the audit and the auditor’s independence and will meet at least four times annually. During the fiscal year ended November 30, 2021, the Audit Committee met ten times.

Nominating Committee. The Board has a Nominating Committee, which is comprised of the Independent Trustees. The Nominating Committee is responsible for seeking and reviewing candidates for consideration as nominees for the position of trustee and meets only as necessary. The Nominating Committee generally will not consider shareholder nominees.

Compensation Committee. The Board has a Compensation Committee, which is comprised of the Independent Trustees. The role of the Compensation Committee is to oversee the evaluation of, and review and approve compensation for, the Independent Trustees. The Compensation Committee will generally meet annually.



## Trustee Compensation

Each Trustee will receive a quarterly fee of \$21,250 (the “Trustee Fee”) to be paid at the beginning of each calendar quarter, allocated among each of the various portfolios comprising the Trust. Each Trustee will also receive reimbursement for any reasonable expenses incurred attending the regular quarterly meetings of the Trust. In addition to the Trustee Fee, the Audit Committee Chairman will receive an additional quarterly fee of \$4,000 and the Chairman of the Trust will receive an additional quarterly fee of \$5,250. For special in-person meetings, each Trustee will receive a \$2,500 special in-person meeting fee, as well as reimbursement for any reasonable expenses incurred attending the special in-person meeting, which fees will generally be paid by the Adviser requesting the special in-person meeting. None of the executive officers will receive compensation from the Trust.

The following table details the estimated amount of compensation the Trustees will receive from the Fund and the Fund Complex for the fiscal year ending November 30, 2023.

Name	North Star Small Cap Value Fund	Pension or Retirement Benefits Accrued as Part of Fund Expenses	Estimated Annual Benefits Upon Retirement	Total Compensation From Fund Complex Paid to Trustees***
Thomas T. Sarkany	\$4,103	None	None	\$4,103
Anthony Lewis	\$4,103	None	None	\$4,103
Keith Rhoades*	\$4,875	None	None	\$4,875
Randy Skalla	\$4,103	None	None	\$4,103
Brian Nielsen**	\$5,116	None	None	\$5,116

\*Mr. Rhoades also serves as Chairman of the Audit Committee.

\*\*Mr. Nielsen also serves as Chairman of the Board.

\*\*\* There are currently multiple series comprising the Trust. The term “Fund Complex” refers only to the North Star Small Cap Value Fund, North Star Bond Fund, North Star Dividend Fund, North Star Microcap Fund and the North Star Opportunity Fund, and not to any other series of the Trust.

## Trustee Ownership

The following table indicates the dollar range of equity securities that each Trustee beneficially owned in the Fund and other series of the Trust as of December 31, 2022:

Name of Trustee	Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund	Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in All Registered Investment Companies Overseen by Trustee in Family of Investment Companies
Thomas T. Sarkany	None	None
Anthony Lewis	None	None
Keith Rhoades	None	None
Randal Skalla	None	None
Brian Nielsen	None	None

As of December 31, 2022, the Trustees and officers, as a group, owned less than 1.00% of the Predecessor Fund’s outstanding shares and the Fund Complex’s outstanding shares.

### Control Persons and Principal Shareholders

A principal shareholder is any person who owns of record or beneficially 5% or more of the outstanding shares of the Fund. A control person is one who owns beneficially or through controlled companies more than 25% of the voting securities of the Fund or acknowledges the existence of control. A controlling person possesses the ability to control the outcome of matters submitted for shareholder vote by the Fund.

As of April 30, 2023, the Predecessor Fund's shareholders of record and/or beneficial owners (to the Predecessor Fund's knowledge) who owned 5% or more of the Predecessor Fund's shares are set forth below:

<u>Name of Shareholder</u>	<u>Total Shares Owned</u>	<u>% Of Share Class Owned</u>
<b>Investor Class Shares</b>		
Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. ATTN: Mutual Funds 211 Main Street San Francisco, CA 94105	747,022.413	29.18%
TD Ameritrade Inc. For the Exclusive Benefit of Our Clients P.O. Box 2226 Omaha, NE	220,006.002	8.59%
NFS LLC FBO our clients 200 Liberty Street New York, NY 10281	1,296,724.533	50.65%
<b>Institutional Class Shares</b>		
Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. ATTN: Mutual Funds 211 Main Street San Francisco, CA 94105	98,864.375	28.05%
NFS LLC FBO our clients 200 Liberty Street New York, NY 10281	197,013.053	55.90%
Raymond James & Associates Inc, FBO The Evah C Cray Residuary Charitable Trust TTEE The Sawmill Trust company 222 S. Main Avenue Sioux Falls, SD 57104	20,705.413	5.88%

## **Investment Adviser**

As stated in the Prospectus, investment advisory services are provided to the Fund by North Star Investment Management Corp., 20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1416, Chicago, IL 60606, pursuant to an Investment Advisory Agreement (the “Advisory Agreement”). North Star Financial Services Corp. is the sole shareholder of the Adviser. Messrs. Peter Gottlieb and Eric Kuby are the principal shareholders of North Star Financial Services Corp. Subject to such policies as the Board of Trustees may determine, the Adviser is ultimately responsible for investment decisions for the Fund. Pursuant to the terms of the Advisory Agreement, the Adviser provides the Fund with such investment advice and supervision as it deems necessary for the proper supervision of the Fund’s investments.

After an initial period of two years, the Advisory Agreement will continue in effect from year to year only if such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by the Board of Trustees or by vote of a majority of the Fund’s outstanding voting securities and by a majority of the trustees who are not parties to the Advisory Agreement or interested persons of any such party, at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on the Advisory Agreement. The Advisory Agreement is terminable without penalty by the Trust on behalf of the Fund upon 60 days’ prior written notice when authorized either by a majority vote of the applicable Fund’s shareholders or by a vote of a majority of the Board of Trustees, or by the Adviser upon 60 days’ prior written notice, and will automatically terminate in the event of its “assignment” (as defined in the 1940 Act). The Advisory Agreement provides that the Adviser, under such agreement, shall not be liable for any error of judgment or mistake of law or for any loss arising out of any investment or for any act or omission in the execution of portfolio transactions for the Fund, except for willful misfeasance, bad faith or negligence in the performance of its duties, or by reason of reckless disregard of its obligations and duties thereunder.

Under the Advisory Agreement, the Adviser, under the supervision of the Board, agrees (directly or through a subadviser) to invest the assets of the Fund in accordance with applicable law and the investment objectives, policies and restrictions set forth in the Fund’s current Prospectus and Statement of Additional Information, and subject to such further limitations as the Trust may from time to time impose by written notice to the Adviser. The Adviser shall act as the investment adviser to the Fund and, as such shall (directly or through a subadviser) (i) obtain and evaluate such information relating to the economy, industries, business, securities markets and securities as it may deem necessary or useful in discharging its responsibilities here under, (ii) formulate a continuing program for the investment of the assets of the Fund in a manner consistent with its investment objective, policies and restrictions, and (iii) determine from time to time securities to be purchased, sold or retained by the Fund, and implement those decisions, including the selection of entities with or through which such purchases or sales are to be effected; provided, that the Adviser (directly or through a subadviser) will place orders pursuant to its investment determinations either directly with the issuer or with a broker or dealer, and if with a broker or dealer, (a) will attempt to obtain the best price and execution of its orders, and (b) may nevertheless in its discretion purchase and sell portfolio securities from and to brokers who provide the Adviser with research, analysis, advice and similar services and pay such brokers in return a higher commission or spread than may be charged by other brokers. The Adviser also provides the Fund with all necessary office facilities and personnel for servicing the Fund’s investments, compensates all officers, Trustees and employees of the Trust who are officers, directors or employees of the Adviser, and all personnel of the Fund or the Adviser performing services relating to research, statistical and investment activities. The Advisory Agreement was approved by the Board of the Trust, including by a majority of the Independent Trustees, at a meeting held on December 22, 2022. Prior to entering into this Advisory Agreement, the Adviser managed the Predecessor Fund since December 15, 2022, under a separate investment advisory agreement with Walhausen Funds.

In addition, the Adviser, directly subject to the supervision of the Board of Trustees, provides the management services necessary for the operation of the Fund and such additional administrative services as reasonably requested by the Board of Trustees. These services include providing such office space, office equipment and office facilities as are adequate to fulfill the Adviser’s obligations under the Advisory Agreement; assisting the Trust in supervising relations with custodians, transfer and pricing agents, accountants, underwriters and other persons dealing with the Fund; assisting in preparing all general shareholder communications and conducting shareholder relations; assuring the Fund’s records and the registration of the Fund’s shares under federal securities laws and making necessary

filings under state securities laws; developing management and shareholder services for the Fund; and furnishing reports, evaluations and analyses on a variety of subjects to the Trustees. Pursuant to the Advisory Agreement, the North Star Small Cap Value Fund pays the Adviser a management fee at the annual rate of 1.00%. The fee is computed daily and payable monthly.

Expenses not expressly assumed by the Adviser under the Advisory Agreement are paid by the Fund. Under the terms of the Advisory Agreement, the Fund is responsible for the payment of the following expenses among others: (a) the fees payable to the Adviser, (b) the fees and expenses of Trustees who are not affiliated persons of the Adviser or Distributor (as defined under the section entitled (“The Distributor”) (c) the fees and certain expenses of the Custodian (as defined under the section entitled “Custodian”) and Transfer and Dividend Disbursing Agent (as defined under the section entitled “Transfer Agent”), including the cost of maintaining certain required records of the Fund and of pricing the Fund’s shares, (d) the charges and expenses of legal counsel and independent accountants for the Fund, (e) brokerage commissions and any issue or transfer taxes chargeable to the Fund in connection with its securities transactions, (f) all taxes and corporate fees payable by the Fund to governmental agencies, (g) the fees of any trade association of which the Fund may be a member, (h) the cost of share certificates representing shares of the Fund, (i) the cost of fidelity and liability insurance, (j) the fees and expenses involved in registering and maintaining registration of the Fund and of their shares with the SEC, qualifying its shares under state securities laws, including the preparation and printing of the Fund’s registration statements and prospectuses for such purposes, (k) all expenses of shareholders and Trustees’ meetings (including travel expenses of trustees and officers of the Trust who are directors, officers or employees of the Adviser) and of preparing, printing and mailing reports, proxy statements and prospectuses to shareholders in the amount necessary for distribution to the shareholders, and (l) litigation and indemnification expenses and other extraordinary expenses not incurred in the ordinary course of the Trust’s business.

The Adviser has agreed contractually to waive its management fee and to reimburse operating expenses (excluding front-end or contingent deferred loads, brokerage fees and commissions, acquired fund fees and expenses, borrowing costs (such as interest and dividend expense on securities sold short), taxes and extraordinary expenses such as litigation) at least until May 31, 2025, such that net annual fund operating expenses of the Fund do not exceed the percentages in the table below.

<b>North Star Small Cap Value Fund</b>	<b>Expense Limitation</b>
<b>Institutional Class</b>	0.98%
<b>Investor Class</b>	1.21%

This operating expense limitation agreement can be terminated only by, or with the consent of, the Board of Trustees. The Adviser is permitted to receive reimbursement from the Fund for fees it waived and Fund expenses it paid, subject to the limitation that: (1) the reimbursement for fees and expenses will be made only if payable within three years from the date the fees and expenses were initially waived or reimbursed; and (2) the reimbursement may not be made if it would cause the expense limitation in effect at the time of the waiver or currently in effect, whichever is lower, to be exceeded. Fee waiver and reimbursement arrangements can decrease the Fund’s expenses and increase its performance. The Adviser is not entitled to recoup expenses of the Predecessor Fund previously waived by Walthausen & Co., LLC (“Walthausen”), the previous investment adviser to the Predecessor Fund. Accordingly, to the extent that Walthausen waived its advisory fees or paid expenses of the Predecessor Fund prior to December 15, 2022, when North Star became the adviser to the Predecessor Fund, those amounts are not eligible to be recouped. As investment adviser prior to December 15, 2022, Walthausen was entitled to receive 1.00% of the Predecessor Fund’s average daily net assets.

For the fiscal years ended January 31, 2021, 2022, and 2023, the Predecessor Fund’s previous investment adviser, Walthausen, earned management fees equal to \$1,927,500, \$1,545,977, and \$679,048, respectively. For the fiscal year ended January 31, 2023, the Adviser earned management fees equal to \$63,189.

Under a services agreement with the Predecessor Fund, Walthausen also received an annual services agreement fee of 0.45% of the average daily net assets of the Fund up to \$100 million, 0.25% of the Fund's average daily net assets between \$100 million and \$500 million, and 0.15% of such assets in excess of \$500 million in exchange for assuming and paying all ordinary expenses of the Predecessor Fund, except that the Predecessor Fund paid all management fees, brokerage fees and commissions, taxes, borrowing costs (such as (a) interest and (b) dividend expenses on securities sold short), underlying fund fees and expenses, and extraordinary or non-recurring expenses. For the fiscal years ended January 31, 2021, 2022, and 2023, Walthausen earned services agreement fees equal to \$681,922, \$585,921, and \$305,007 respectively, from the Predecessor Fund. For the fiscal years ending January 31, 2021, 2022 and 2023, Walthausen waived services agreement fees and advisory fees for the Investor Class Shares of the Predecessor Fund totaling \$128,150, \$135,919, and \$108,980, respectively. For the fiscal year ending January 31, 2021, 2022 and 2023, Walthausen waived services agreement fees and advisory fees for the Institutional Class Shares totaling \$385,194, \$303,619, and \$106,992, respectively, for the Predecessor Fund.

### Portfolio Managers

The following section provides information regarding each Portfolio Manager's other accounts managed, compensation, material conflicts of interests, and any ownership of securities in the Fund. The Portfolio Managers are shown together in this section only for ease in presenting the information and should not be viewed for purposes of comparing the Portfolio Managers against one another. Eric Kuby and Peter Gottlieb are Portfolio Managers for the Fund.

*Eric Kuby.* Mr. Kuby has over 37 years of experience, serving both individual and institutional clients. Mr. Kuby joined the Adviser in 2004 and has been Chief Investment Officer of the Adviser since 2005. As Chairman of the Investment Committee, he is responsible for overseeing the firm's various investment strategies. Mr. Kuby holds an MBA in Finance as well as a BA in Economics from The University of Chicago.

*Peter Gottlieb.* Mr. Gottlieb has over 31 years' experience in the financial industry as a financial advisor as well as serving on the Board of Directors of a community bank, a publicly traded business development company and a community hospital. Mr. Gottlieb is the Founder and President of the Adviser since 2003. Mr. Gottlieb earned his BA degree from the University of Michigan, School of Business.

In addition to the Fund, the following table lists the number and types of accounts managed by the portfolio managers and assets under management in those accounts as of January 31, 2023

Portfolio Managers	Registered Investment Companies (excluding the Fund)		Other Pooled Investment Vehicles		Other Accounts	
	Number of Accounts	Total Assets in the Accounts	Number of Accounts	Total Assets in the Accounts	Number of Accounts	Total Assets in the Accounts
	Eric Kuby	4	\$355,985,947	0	\$0	477
Peter Gottlieb	4	\$355,985,947	0	\$0	551	\$417,477,323

### Material Conflicts of Interest

Actual or apparent material conflicts of interest may arise when a Portfolio Manager has day-to-day management responsibilities with respect to more than one investment account or in other circumstances. Portfolio Managers who manage other investment accounts in addition to the Fund may be presented with the potential conflicts described below.

The Adviser receives research that may be appropriate for clients in multiple strategies. However, in most cases, the research is targeted to a specific strategy. In cases where the research would be applicable to multiple strategies, the portfolio managers will base their decision to allocate ideas for each account independently and in a manner consistent with previous trading and investment patterns.

Trade allocation decisions are made among client accounts on a fair and equitable basis to ensure that no single relationship has a trading advantage. When two or more client accounts are simultaneously engaged in the purchase or sale of the same security, to the extent possible, the transactions will be aggregated in a single trade and these accounts will receive the security at an average share price on the aggregated trade. Partially-filled block trades will be allocated on a percentage basis.

The Chief Compliance Officer regularly reviews investment allocations for irregularities or abuses. Additionally, trades may be executed by NewEdge Securities, Inc., an affiliate of the Adviser. Any potential conflicts will be resolved in accordance with the Fund’s Rule 17e-1 procedures.

**Portfolio Managers’ Compensation**

The following section describes the structure of, and the methods used to determine the different types of compensation (e.g., salary, bonus, deferred compensation, and retirement plans and arrangements) for each of the Fund’s Portfolio Managers.

The Portfolio Managers’ compensation is a fixed salary that is set by reference to industry standards. Bonuses paid to the Portfolio Managers are based on the profitability of the Adviser and the Portfolio Managers’ equity ownership in the Adviser.

**Portfolio Managers’ Ownership of the Fund**

The following table shows the dollar range of equity securities beneficially owned by the portfolio managers of the Fund as of January 31, 2023:

Name of Portfolio Manager	Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund
Eric Kuby	None
Peter Gottlieb	\$10,001 - \$50,000

**Other Service Providers**

**Administrator**

Pursuant to a Fund Services Agreement (the “Administration Service Agreement”), Ultimus Fund Solution, LLC (“UFS”), 4221 North 203rd Street, Suite 100, Elkhorn, NE 68022 (the “Administrator”), acts as administrator for the Fund, subject to the supervision of the Board. UFS is primarily in the business of providing administrative, fund accounting and transfer agent services to retail and institutional mutual Fund. UFS is an affiliate of the Distributor. UFS may provide persons to serve as officers of the Fund. Such officers may be directors, officers or employees of UFS or its affiliates.

The Administration Service Agreement is terminable by the Board or UFS on 60 days’ prior written notice and may be assigned provided the non-assigning party provides prior written consent. This Agreement provides that in the absence of willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence on the part of UFS or reckless disregard of its obligations thereunder, UFS shall not be liable for any action or failure to act in accordance with its duties thereunder.

Under the Administration Service Agreement, UFS provides facilitating administrative services, including: (i) providing services of persons competent to perform such administrative and clerical functions as are necessary to provide effective administration of the Fund; (ii) facilitating the performance of administrative and professional services to the Fund by others, including the Fund’s Custodian; (iii) preparing, but not paying for, the periodic updating of the Fund’s Registration Statement, Prospectuses and Statement of Additional Information in conjunction with Fund counsel, including the printing of such documents for the purpose of filings with the SEC and state securities administrators, and preparing reports to the Fund’s shareholders and the SEC; (iv) preparing in

conjunction with Fund counsel, but not paying for, all filings under the securities or “Blue Sky” laws of such states or countries as are designated by the Distributor, which may be required to register or qualify, or continue the registration or qualification, of the Fund and/or their shares under such laws; (v) preparing notices and agendas for meetings of the Board and minutes of such meetings in all matters required by the 1940 Act to be acted upon by the Board; and (vi) monitoring daily and periodic compliance with respect to all requirements and restrictions of the 1940 Act, the Internal Revenue Code and the Prospectus.

For the services rendered to the Fund by the Administrator, the Fund pays the Administrator the greater of an annual minimum fee or an asset based fee, which scales downward based upon net assets for fund administration services. All basis point fees will be calculated based upon the average net assets of the Fund complex for the previous month.

### **Fund Accounting**

UFS, pursuant to the Administration Service Agreement, provides the Fund with accounting services, including: (i) daily computation of net asset value; (ii) maintenance of security ledgers and books and records as required by the 1940 Act; (iii) production of the Fund’s listing of portfolio securities and general ledger reports; (iv) reconciliation of accounting records; (v) calculation of yield and total return for the Fund; (vi) maintaining certain books and records described in Rule 31a-1 under the 1940 Act, and reconciling account information and balances among the Fund’s custodian or Adviser; and (vii) monitoring and evaluating daily income and expense accruals, and sales and redemptions of shares of the Fund.

For the services rendered to the Fund by the Administrator, the Fund pays the Administrator the greater of an annual minimum fee or an asset based fee, which scales downward based upon net assets for fund accounting services. All basis point fees will be calculated based upon the average net assets of the Fund complex for the previous month. The Fund also pay UFS for equity and bond price quotes, as well as any out-of-pocket expenses.

### **Transfer Agent**

UFS, 4221 North 203<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100, Elkhorn, NE 68022, acts as transfer, dividend disbursing, and shareholder servicing agent for the Fund pursuant to a written agreement with the Fund. Under the agreement, UFS is responsible for administering and performing transfer agent functions, dividend distribution, shareholder administration, and maintaining necessary records in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.

### **Predecessor Fund Admin, Fund Accounting and Transfer Agent Services**

Ultimus previously provided the Predecessor Fund with pricing, accounting, dividend disbursing, shareholder servicing and transfer agent services. For the fiscal year ended January 31, 2021, the Advisor paid Ultimus \$80,790 for transfer agent and accounting services. For the fiscal year ended January 31, 2022, the Predecessor Fund’s prior investment adviser, Walhausen, paid Ultimus \$66,977 for transfer agent and accounting services. For the fiscal year ended January 31, 2023, Walhausen paid Ultimus \$56,224 for transfer agent and accounting services.

Premier Fund Solutions, Inc. (“PFS”), 1939 Friendship Drive, Suite C, El Cajon, CA 92020, previously provided the Predecessor Fund with administrative services. For the fiscal years ended January 31, 2021, 2022, and 2023, Walhausen paid PFS \$99,507, \$81,051, and \$41,337, respectively, for administrative services for the Predecessor Fund.

### **Custodian**

U.S. Bank, National Association (“U.S. Bank”), 1555 North River Center Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53212, (the “Custodian”), serves as the custodian of the Fund’s assets pursuant to a Custody Agreement by and between the Custodian and the Trust on behalf of the Fund. The Custodian’s responsibilities include safeguarding and controlling the Fund’s cash and securities, handling the receipt and delivery of securities, and collecting interest and dividends on the Fund’s investments. Pursuant to the Custody Agreement, the Custodian also maintains original entry documents and books of record and general ledgers; posts cash receipts and disbursements; and

records purchases and sales based upon communications from the Adviser. The Fund may employ foreign sub-custodians that are approved by the Board to hold foreign assets.

### **Compliance Services**

Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC (“NLCS”), 4221 North 203<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100, Elkhorn, NE 68022, an affiliate of UFS and the Distributor, provides a Chief Compliance Officer to the Trust as well as related compliance services pursuant to a consulting agreement between NLCS and the Trust. The Fund pays a compliance service fee to NLCS.

### **Legal Counsel**

Alston & Bird, LLP, 950 F Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20004, serves as counsel to the Trust.  
Blank Rome LLP, 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, serves as counsel to the Independent Trustees.

### **Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm**

RSM US LLP, 555 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1200, Denver, CO 80202, serves as the independent registered public accounting firm of the Fund.

### **Distribution of Fund Shares**

Northern Lights Distributors, LLC, located at 4221 North 203<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100, Elkhorn, NE 68022 (the "Distributor") serves as the principal underwriter and national distributor for the shares of the Fund pursuant to an underwriting agreement with the Trust (the "Underwriting Agreement"). The Distributor is registered as a broker-dealer under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and each state's securities laws and is a member of FINRA. The offering of the Fund's shares are continuous. The Underwriting Agreement provides that the Distributor, as agent in connection with the distribution of Fund shares, will use reasonable efforts to facilitate the sale of the Fund's shares.

The Underwriting Agreement has an initial term of two years and will continue in effect only if such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by the Board of Trustees or by vote of a majority of the Fund's outstanding voting securities and, in either case, by a majority of the trustees who are not parties to the Underwriting Agreement or “interested persons” (as defined in the 1940 Act) of any such party. The Underwriting Agreement is terminable without penalty by the Trust on behalf of the Fund on 60 days' notice when authorized either by a majority vote of the Fund's outstanding voting securities or by vote of a majority of the Board of Trustees, including a majority of the trustees who are not “interested persons” (as defined in the 1940 Act) of the Trust, or by the Distributor on 60 days' notice, and will automatically terminate in the event of its “assignment” (as defined in the 1940 Act).

The Distributor may enter into selling agreements with broker-dealers that solicit orders for the sale of shares of the Fund and may allow concessions to dealers that sell shares of the Fund.

Compensation for the services performed by Predecessor Fund's prior distributor were paid by the Predecessor Fund's prior adviser from its own resources, not the Fund.

### **12b-1 Distribution and Shareholder Servicing Plan**

As noted in the Prospectus, the Trust has adopted a Distribution and Shareholder Servicing Plan pursuant to Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act for the Investor Class shares for the Fund. Such fees are to be paid by the Fund monthly, or at such other intervals, as the Board shall determine. Such fees shall be based upon each share class's average daily net assets during the preceding month, and shall be calculated and accrued daily. The Fund may pay fees to the Distributor at a lesser rate, as agreed upon by the Board of the Trust and the Distributor. The Plan authorizes payments to the Distributor as compensation for providing account maintenance services to Fund shareholders, including arranging for certain securities dealers or brokers, administrators and others (“Recipients”) to provide these services and paying compensation for these services.



The services to be provided by Recipients may include, but are not limited to, the following: assistance in the offering and sale of Fund shares and in other aspects of the marketing of the shares to clients or prospective clients of the respective recipients; answering routine inquiries concerning the Fund; assisting in the establishment and maintenance of accounts or sub-accounts in the Fund and in processing purchase and redemption transactions; making the Fund's investment plan and shareholder services available; and providing such other information and services to investors in shares of the Fund as the Distributor or the Trust, on behalf of the Fund, may reasonably request. The distribution services shall also include any advertising and marketing services provided by or arranged by the Distributor with respect to the Fund. The Adviser may be compensated by the Distributor for its distribution and marketing efforts.

The Distributor is required to provide a written report, at least quarterly to the Board of the Trust, specifying in reasonable detail the amounts expended pursuant to the Plan and the purposes for which such expenditures were made. Further, the Distributor will inform the Board of any Rule 12b-1 fees to be paid by the Distributor to Recipients.

The initial term of the Plan is one year and will continue in effect from year to year thereafter, provided such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by a majority of the Board of the Trust and a majority of the Trustees who are not "interested persons" of the Trust and do not have a direct or indirect financial interest in the Plan ("Rule 12b-1 Trustees") by votes cast in person at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on the Plan. The Plan may be terminated at any time by the Trust or the Fund by vote of a majority of the Rule 12b-1 Trustees or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting shares of the Fund.

The Plan may not be amended to increase materially the amount of the Distributor's compensation to be paid by the Fund, unless such amendment is approved by the vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the affected class of the Fund (as defined in the 1940 Act). All material amendments must be approved by a majority of the Board of the Trust and a majority of the Rule 12b-1 Trustees by votes cast in person at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on the Plan. During the term of the Plan, the selection and nomination of non-interested Trustees of the Trust will be committed to the discretion of current non-interested Trustees. The Distributor will preserve copies of the Plan, any related agreements, and all reports, for a period of not less than six years from the date of such document and for at least the first two years in an easily accessible place.

Any agreement related to the Plan will be in writing and provide that: (a) it may be terminated by the Trust or the Fund at any time upon sixty days' written notice, without the payment of any penalty, by vote of a majority of the respective Rule 12b-1 Trustees, or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Trust or Fund; (b) it will automatically terminate in the event of its assignment (as defined in the 1940 Act); and (c) it will continue in effect for a period of more than one year from the date of its execution or adoption only so long as such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by a majority of the Board and a majority of the Rule 12b-1 Trustees by votes cast in person at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on such agreement.

To the extent these asset-based fees and other payments made under the Distribution Plan to these financial intermediaries for the distribution services they provide to the Fund's shareholders exceed the Distribution Fees available, these payments are made by the Adviser from its own resources, which may include its profits from the advisory fee it receives from the Fund. In addition, the Fund may participate in various "fund supermarkets" in which a mutual fund supermarket sponsor (usually a broker-dealer) offers many mutual Fund to the sponsor's customers without charging the customers a sales charge. In connection with its participation in such platforms, the Adviser may use all or a portion of the Distribution Fee to pay one or more supermarket sponsors a negotiated fee for distributing the Fund's shares. In addition, in its discretion, the Adviser may pay additional fees to such intermediaries from its own assets.

The Predecessor Fund did not have a Rule 12b-1 Plan in place.

## **Portfolio Transactions and Brokerage Allocation**

Pursuant to the Advisory Agreement, the Adviser determines which securities are to be purchased and sold by the Fund and which broker-dealers are eligible to execute the Fund's portfolio transactions. Purchases and sales of securities in the OTC market will generally be executed directly with a "market-maker" unless, in the opinion of the Adviser, a better price and execution can otherwise be obtained by using a broker for the transaction.

Purchases of portfolio securities for the Fund will be effected through broker-dealers (including banks) that specialize in the types of securities that the Fund will be holding, unless better executions are available elsewhere. Dealers usually act as principal for their own accounts. Purchases from dealers will include a spread between the bid and the asked price. If the execution and price offered by more than one dealer are comparable, the order may be allocated to a dealer that has provided research or other services as discussed below.

In placing portfolio transactions, the Adviser will use reasonable efforts to choose broker-dealers capable of providing the services necessary to obtain the most favorable price and execution available. The full range and quality of services available will be considered in making these determinations, such as the size of the order, the difficulty of execution, the operational facilities of the firm involved, the firm's risk in positioning a block of securities and other factors. In those instances where it is reasonably determined that more than one broker-dealer can offer the services needed to obtain the most favorable price and execution available, consideration may be given to those broker-dealers that furnish or supply research and statistical information to the Adviser that they may lawfully and appropriately use in their investment advisory capacities, as well as provide other brokerage services in addition to execution services. The Adviser considers such information, which is in addition to and not in lieu of the services required to be performed by it under its Advisory Agreement with the Fund, to be useful in varying degrees, but of indeterminable value.

While it is the Fund's general policy to first seek to obtain the most favorable price and execution available in selecting a broker-dealer to execute portfolio transactions for the Fund, weight is also given to the ability of a broker-dealer to furnish brokerage and research services to the Fund or to the Adviser, even if the specific services are not directly useful to the Fund and may be useful to the Adviser in advising other clients. In negotiating commissions with a broker or evaluating the spread to be paid to a dealer, the Fund may therefore pay a higher commission or spread than would be the case if no weight were given to the furnishing of these supplemental services, provided that the amount of such commission or spread has been determined in good faith by the Adviser to be reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and/or research services provided by such broker-dealer. The standard of reasonableness is to be measured in light of the Adviser's overall responsibilities to the Fund.

Investment decisions for the Fund may or may not be made independently from those of other client accounts of the Adviser. In certain instances, investment decisions will be made similar to other accounts managed. In the case where the Fund use similar strategies, applicable procedures will be taken to ensure trading allocations will be handled fairly and abide by all appropriate rules and regulations. Nevertheless, it is possible that at times identical securities will be acceptable for both the Fund and one or more of such client accounts. In such event, the position of the Fund and such client account(s) in the same issuer may vary and the length of time that each may choose to hold its investment in the same issuer may likewise vary. However, to the extent any of these client accounts seek to acquire the same security as the Fund at the same time, the Fund may not be able to acquire as large a portion of such security as it desires, or it may have to pay a higher price or obtain a lower yield for such security. Similarly, the Fund may not be able to obtain as high a price for, or as large an execution of, an order to sell any particular security at the same time. If one or more of such client accounts simultaneously purchases or sells the same security that the Fund is purchasing or selling, each day's transactions in such security will be allocated between the Fund and all such client accounts in a manner deemed equitable by the Adviser, taking into account the respective sizes of the accounts and the amount being purchased or sold. It is recognized that in some cases this system could have a detrimental effect on the price or value of the security insofar as the Fund is concerned. In other cases, however, it is believed that the ability of the Fund to participate in volume transactions may produce better executions for the Fund. Notwithstanding the above, the Adviser may execute buy and sell orders for accounts and take action in performance of their duties with respect to any of their accounts that may differ from actions taken with respect to

another account, so long as the Adviser shall, to the extent practical, allocate investment opportunities to accounts, including the Fund, over a period of time on a fair and equitable basis and in accordance with applicable law.

The Fund is required to identify any securities of its “regular brokers or dealers” that the Fund have acquired during its most recent fiscal year. The Fund is also required to identify any brokerage transactions during its most recent fiscal year that were directed to a broker because of research services provided, along with the amount of any such transactions and any related commissions paid by the Fund.

Brokers or dealers executing a portfolio transaction on behalf of the Fund may receive a commission in excess of the amount of commission another broker or dealer would have charged for executing the transaction if the Adviser determines in good faith that such commission is reasonable in relation to the value of brokerage, research and other services provided to the Fund. In allocating portfolio brokerage, the Adviser may select brokers or dealers who also provide brokerage, research and other services to other accounts over which the Adviser exercises investment discretion. Some of the services received as the result of Fund transactions may primarily benefit accounts other than the Fund, while services received as the result of portfolio transactions effected on behalf of those other accounts may primarily benefit the Fund.

The table below shows the broker commissions paid by the Predecessor Fund during the years indicated.

	<b>Brokerage Commissions</b>
<b>Fiscal year ended January 31, 2023</b>	\$98,481
<b>Fiscal year ended January 31, 2022</b>	\$317,037
<b>Fiscal year ended January 31, 2021</b>	\$480,021

## **Portfolio Turnover**

Although the Fund generally will not invest for short-term trading purposes, portfolio securities may be sold without regard to the length of time they have been held when, in the opinion of the Adviser, investment considerations warrant such action. Portfolio turnover rate is calculated by dividing (i) the lesser of purchases or sales of portfolio securities for the fiscal year by (ii) the monthly average of the value of portfolio securities owned during the fiscal year. A 100% turnover rate would occur if all the securities in the Fund’s portfolio, with the exception of securities whose maturities at the time of acquisition were one year or less, were sold and either repurchased or replaced within one year. A high rate of portfolio turnover (100% or more) generally leads to above-average transaction costs, could generate capital gains that must be distributed to shareholders as short-term capital gains taxed at ordinary income tax rates (currently as high as 37%) and could increase brokerage commission costs. To the extent that the Fund experiences an increase in brokerage commissions due to a higher portfolio turnover rate, the performance of the Fund could be negatively impacted by the increased expenses incurred by the Fund and may result in a greater number of taxable transactions.

The Predecessor Fund’s historical portfolio turnover rates are included in the Financial Highlights tables in the Fund’s Prospectus.

## **Code of Ethics**

The Fund, the Adviser, and the Distributor have each adopted Codes of Ethics under Rule 17j-1 of the 1940 Act. These Codes permit, subject to certain conditions, personnel of the Adviser, and Distributor to invest in securities that may be purchased or held by the Fund.

## **Proxy Voting Procedures**

The Board of Trustees has adopted proxy voting policies and procedures (“Proxy Policies”) wherein the Trust has delegated to the Adviser the responsibility for voting proxies relating to portfolio securities held by the Fund as part of its investment advisory services, subject to the supervision and oversight of the Board of Trustees. The Proxy Voting Policies of the Adviser are included as Appendix B.

More Information. Information regarding how the Fund voted proxies relating to portfolio securities during the twelve-month period ended June 30 will be available without charge, upon request, by calling toll-free, 1-800-SEC-0330 or by accessing the SEC's website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

### **Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Program**

The Trust has established an Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Program (the "Program") as required by the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 ("USA PATRIOT Act"). To ensure compliance with this law, the Trust's Program provides for the development of internal practices, procedures and controls, designation of anti-money laundering compliance officers, an ongoing training program and an independent audit function to determine the effectiveness of the Program. The Trust's secretary serves as its Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer.

Procedures to implement the Program include, but are not limited to, determining that the Fund's Distributor and Transfer Agent have established proper anti-money laundering procedures, reporting suspicious and/or fraudulent activity and a providing a complete and thorough review of all new opening account applications. The Trust will not transact business with any person or entity whose identity cannot be adequately verified under the provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act.

As a result of the Program, the Trust may be required to "freeze" the account of a shareholder if the shareholder appears to be involved in suspicious activity or if certain account information matches information on government lists of known terrorists or other suspicious persons, or the Trust may be required to transfer the account or proceeds of the account to a governmental agency.

### **Portfolio Holdings Information**

The Trust has adopted policies and procedures that govern the disclosure of the Fund's portfolio holdings. These policies and procedures are designed to ensure that such disclosure is in the best interests of Fund shareholders.

It is the Trust's policy to: (1) ensure that any disclosure of portfolio holdings information is in the best interest of Trust shareholders; (2) protect the confidentiality of portfolio holdings information; (3) have procedures in place to guard against personal trading based on the information; and (4) ensure that the disclosure of portfolio holdings information does not create conflicts between the interests of the Trust's shareholders and those of the Trust's affiliates.

The Fund disclose their portfolio holdings in regulatory filings and shareholder reports, as required by federal and state securities laws and may disclose portfolio holdings information in response to requests by governmental authorities. The Fund disclose their portfolio holdings directly to shareholders by mailing said annual and semi-annual shareholder reports to shareholders approximately two months after the end of the fiscal year and semi-annual period. In addition, the Fund file their portfolio holdings in periodic reports with the SEC on Forms N-CSR, and N-PORT on a sixty day lag and on Form N-CEN on a, 75 days lag, at, the end of the relevant quarter/semi-annual or annual period. These filings are available to the public on the SEC's website at SEC.gov.

The Fund may choose to make portfolio holdings information available to rating agencies such as Lipper, Morningstar or Bloomberg earlier and more frequently on a confidential basis.

Under limited circumstances, as described below, the Fund's portfolio holdings may be disclosed to, or known by, certain third parties in advance of their filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission on Form N-CSR or Form N-PORT. In each case, a determination has been made that such advance disclosure is supported by a legitimate business purpose and that the recipient is subject to a duty to keep the information confidential.

The Adviser currently makes the Fund’s complete portfolio holdings, top ten holdings, sector weightings and other portfolio characteristics publicly available on its web site, [www.nsinvestFund.com](http://www.nsinvestFund.com) as disclosed in the following table:

<b>Information Posting</b>	<b>Frequency of Disclosure</b>	<b>Date of Web Posting</b>
Complete Portfolio Holdings	Quarterly	15 days after the end of each calendar quarter for the Fund
Top 10 Portfolio Holdings and other portfolio characteristics	Quarterly	10 days after the end of each calendar quarter for the Fund

The scope of the information relating to the Fund’s portfolios that is made available on the web site may change from time to time without notice. The Adviser or its affiliates may include the Fund’s portfolio information that has already been made public through a Web posting or SEC filing in marketing literature and other communications to shareholders, advisors or other parties, provided that, in the case of information made public through the Web, the information is disclosed no earlier than the day after the date of posting to the Web site.

**The Adviser.** Personnel of the Adviser, including personnel responsible for managing the Fund’s portfolio, may have full daily access to Fund portfolio holdings since that information is necessary in order for the Adviser to provide their management, administrative, and investment services to the Fund. As required for purposes of analyzing the impact of existing and future market changes on the prices, availability, demand and liquidity of such securities, as well as for the assistance of portfolio managers in the trading of such securities, Adviser personnel may also release and discuss certain portfolio holdings with various broker-dealers.

**Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC.** Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC is the transfer agent, fund accountant and administrator for the Fund; therefore, its personnel have full daily access to the Fund’s portfolio holdings since that information is necessary in order for them to provide the agreed-upon services for the Trust.

**Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC.** Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC provides consulting services to the Fund as well as related compliance services; therefore, its personnel have full daily access to the Fund’s portfolio holdings since that information is necessary in order for them to provide the agreed-upon services for the Trust.

**U.S Bank, National Association.** U.S. Bank, National Association is custodian for the Fund; therefore, its personnel have full daily access to the Fund’s portfolio holdings since that information is necessary in order for them to provide the agreed-upon services for the Trust.

**RSM US LLP.** RSM US LLP is the Fund’s independent registered public accounting firm; therefore, its personnel have access to the Fund’s portfolio holdings in connection with auditing of the Fund’s annual financial statements and providing other audit, tax and related services to the Fund.

**Alston & Bird, LLP.** Alston & Bird, LLP is counsel to the Trust; therefore, its personnel have access to the Fund’s portfolio holdings in connection with review of the Fund’s annual and semi-annual shareholder reports and SEC filings.

**Blank Rome, LLP.** Blank Rome, LLP is counsel to the Independent Trustees

#### **Additions to List of Approved Recipients**

The Trust’s Chief Compliance Officer is the person responsible, and whose prior approval is required, for any disclosure of the Fund’s portfolio securities at any time or to any persons other than those described above. In

such cases, the recipient must have a legitimate business need for the information and must be subject to a duty to keep the information confidential. There are no ongoing arrangements in place with respect to the disclosure of portfolio holdings. In no event shall the Fund, the Adviser, or any other party receive any direct or indirect compensation in connection with the disclosure of information about the Fund's portfolio holdings.

### **Compliance With Portfolio Holdings Disclosure Procedures**

The Trust's Chief Compliance Officer will report periodically to the Board with respect to compliance with the Fund's portfolio holdings disclosure procedures, and from time to time will provide the Board any updates to the portfolio holdings disclosure policies and procedures.

There is no assurance that the Trust's policies on disclosure of portfolio holdings will protect the Fund from the potential misuse of holdings information by individuals or firms in possession of that information.

### **Determination of Net Asset Value**

As indicated in the Prospectus under the heading "Share Price," the net asset value ("NAV") of the Fund's shares, by class, is determined by dividing the total value of the Fund's portfolio investments and other assets, less any liabilities, by the total number of shares outstanding of the Fund, by class.

Generally, the Fund's domestic securities (including underlying ETFs which hold portfolio securities primarily listed on foreign (non-U.S.) exchanges) are valued each day at the last quoted sales price on each security's primary exchange. Securities traded or dealt in upon one or more securities exchanges for which market quotations are readily available and not subject to restrictions against resale shall be valued at the last quoted sales price on the primary exchange or, in the absence of a sale on the primary exchange, at the mean between the current bid and ask prices on such exchange. Securities primarily traded in the National Association of Securities Dealers' Automated Quotation System ("NASDAQ") National Market System for which market quotations are readily available shall be valued using the NASDAQ Official Closing Price. The Board has appointed the Adviser as its designee (the "Valuation Designee") for all fair value determinations and responsibilities, other than overseeing pricing service providers used by the Trust. If market quotations are not readily available, securities will be valued at their fair market value as determined in good faith by the Fund's Valuation Designee in accordance with procedures approved by the Board and as further described below. Securities that are not traded or dealt in any securities exchange (whether domestic or foreign) and for which over-the-counter market quotations are readily available generally shall be valued at the last sale price or, in the absence of a sale, at the mean between the current bid and ask price on such over-the-counter market.

Certain securities or investments for which daily market quotes are not readily available may be fair valued by the Valuation Designee, pursuant to guidelines established by the Board, with reference to other securities or indices. Debt securities not traded on an exchange may be valued at prices supplied by a pricing agent(s) based on broker or dealer supplied valuations or matrix pricing, a method of valuing securities by reference to the value of other securities with similar characteristics, such as rating, interest rate and maturity. Short-term investments having a maturity of 60 days or less may be generally valued at amortized cost when it approximates fair value.

Exchange traded options are valued at the last quoted sales price or, in the absence of a sale, at the mean between the current bid and ask prices on the exchange on which such options are traded. Futures and options on futures are valued at the settlement price determined by the exchange. Other securities for which market quotes are not readily available are valued at fair value as determined in good faith by Valuation Designee. Swap agreements and other derivatives are generally valued daily based upon quotations from market makers or by a pricing service in accordance with the valuation procedures approved by the Board.

Under certain circumstances, the Fund may use an independent pricing service to calculate the fair market value of foreign equity securities on a daily basis by applying valuation factors to the last sale price or the mean price as noted above. The fair market values supplied by the independent pricing service will generally reflect market trading

that occurs after the close of the applicable foreign markets of comparable securities or the value of other instruments that have a strong correlation to the fair-valued securities. The independent pricing service will also take into account the current relevant currency exchange rate. A security that is fair valued may be valued at a price higher or lower than actual market quotations or the value determined by other Fund using their own fair valuation procedures. Because foreign securities may trade on days when Fund shares are not priced, the value of securities held by the Fund can change on days when Fund shares cannot be redeemed or purchased. In the event that a foreign security's market quotations are not readily available or are deemed unreliable (for reasons other than because the foreign exchange on which it trades closed before the Fund's calculation of NAV), the security will be valued at its fair market value as determined in good faith by the Fund's Valuation Designee in accordance with procedures approved by the Board as discussed below. Without fair valuation, it is possible that short-term traders could take advantage of the arbitrage opportunity and dilute the NAV of long-term investors. Fair valuation of the Fund's portfolio securities can serve to reduce arbitrage opportunities available to short-term traders, but there is no assurance that it will prevent dilution of the Fund's NAV by short-term traders. In addition, because the Fund may invest in underlying ETFs which hold portfolio securities primarily listed on foreign (non-U.S.) exchanges, and these exchanges may trade on weekends or other days when the underlying ETFs do not price their shares, the value of these portfolio securities may change on days when you may not be able to buy or sell Fund shares.

Investments initially valued in currencies other than the U.S. dollar are converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rates obtained from pricing services. As a result, the NAV of the Fund's shares may be affected by changes in the value of currencies in relation to the U.S. dollar. The value of securities traded in markets outside the United States or denominated in currencies other than the U.S. dollar may be affected significantly on a day that the New York Stock Exchange is closed and an investor is not able to purchase, redeem or exchange shares.

Fund shares are valued at the close of regular trading on the New York Stock Exchange (normally 4:00 p.m., Eastern time) (the "NYSE Close") on each day that the New York Stock Exchange is open. For purposes of calculating the NAV, the Fund normally use pricing data for domestic equity securities received shortly after the NYSE Close and does not normally take into account trading, clearances or settlements that take place after the NYSE Close. Domestic fixed income and foreign securities are normally priced using data reflecting the earlier closing of the principal markets for those securities. Information that becomes known to the Fund or its agents after the NAV has been calculated on a particular day will not generally be used to retroactively adjust the price of the security or the NAV determined earlier that day.

When market quotations are not readily available or deemed unreliable, the Fund may value securities at fair value as determined in good faith by the Valuation Designee, pursuant to procedures approved by the Board. Fair valuation may also be used by the Valuation Designee if extraordinary events occur after the close of the relevant market but prior to the NYSE Close.

### **Purchase of Shares**

Orders for shares received by the Fund in good order prior to the close of business on the NYSE on each day during such periods that the NYSE is open for trading are priced at NAV per share computed as of the close of the regular session of trading on the NYSE. Orders received in good order after the close of the NYSE, or on a day it is not open for trading, are priced at the close of such NYSE on the next day on which it is open for trading at the next determined NAV or offering price per share.

### **Redemption of Shares**

The Fund will redeem all or any portion of a shareholder's shares in the Fund when requested in accordance with the procedures set forth in the "Redemptions" section of the Prospectus. Under the 1940 Act, a shareholder's right to redeem shares and to receive payment therefore may be suspended at times:

- (a) when the NYSE is closed, other than customary weekend and holiday closings;
- (b) when trading on that exchange is restricted for any reason;

- (c) when an emergency exists as a result of which disposal by the Fund of securities owned by it is not reasonably practicable or it is not reasonably practicable for the Fund to fairly determine the value of its net assets, provided that applicable rules and regulations of the SEC (or any succeeding governmental authority) will govern as to whether the conditions prescribed in (b) or (c) exist; or
- (d) when the SEC by order permits a suspension of the right to redemption or a postponement of the date of payment on redemption.

In case of suspension of the right of redemption, payment of a redemption request will be made based on the NAV next determined after the termination of the suspension.

The Fund may purchase shares of certain series which charge a redemption fee to shareholders (such as the Fund) that redeem shares of the underlying fund within a certain period of time (such as one year). The fee is payable to the underlying fund. Accordingly, if the Fund were to invest in an underlying fund and incur a redemption fee as a result of redeeming shares in such underlying fund, the Fund would bear such redemption fee. The Fund will not, however, invest in shares of an underlying fund that is sold with a contingent deferred sales load.

Supporting documents in addition to those listed under “Redemptions” in the Prospectus will be required from executors, administrators, Trustees, or if redemption is requested by someone other than the shareholder of record. Such documents include, but are not restricted to, stock powers, Trust instruments, certificates of death, appointments as executor, certificates of corporate authority and waiver of tax required in some states when settling estates.

Under section 72.1021(a) of the Texas Property Code, initial investors in the Fund who are Texas residents may designate a representative to receive notices of abandoned property in connection with Fund shares. Texas shareholders who wish to appoint a representative should notify the Trust’s Transfer Agent by writing to the respective Fund at the address below to obtain a form for providing written notice to the Trust:

Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC  
4221 North 203<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Elkhorn, Nebraska 68022

### **Tax Status**

The following discussion is general in nature and should not be regarded as an exhaustive presentation of all possible tax ramifications. The tax considerations relevant to a specific shareholder depend upon its specific circumstances, and the following general summary does not attempt to discuss all potential tax considerations that could be relevant to a prospective shareholder with respect to the Fund or its investments. This general summary is based on the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”), the Federal Income Tax Regulations promulgated thereunder, and administrative and judicial interpretations thereof as of the date hereof, all of which are subject to change (potentially on a retroactive basis).

The following discussion of tax consequences is for the general information of shareholders that are subject to tax. Shareholders that are IRAs or other qualified retirement plans are exempt from income taxation under the Code. All shareholders should consult a qualified tax advisor regarding their investment in the Fund.

The Fund has elected to qualify and intends to continue to qualify to be treated as a regulated investment company under Subchapter M of the Code, for each taxable year by complying with all applicable requirements regarding the source of its income, the diversification of its assets, and the timing and amount of its distributions. The Fund’s policy is to distribute to its shareholders all of its investment company taxable income and any net realized capital gains for each fiscal year in a manner that complies with the distribution requirements of the Code, so that the Fund will not be subject to any federal income or excise taxes based on net income. However, the Board may elect to pay such excise taxes if it determines that payment is, under the circumstances, in the best interests of the Fund. If the Fund does not qualify as a regulated investment company, it may be taxed as a corporation.



In order to qualify as a regulated investment company under Subchapter M of the Code, the Fund must, among other things, derive at least 90% of its gross income each year from dividends, interest, payments with respect to loans of stock and securities, gains from the sale or other disposition of stock or securities or foreign currency gains related to investments in stock or securities, or other income (generally including gains from options, futures or forward contracts) derived with respect to the business of investing in stock, securities or currency, and net income derived from an interest in a qualified publicly traded partnership. The Fund must also satisfy the following two asset diversification tests. At the end of each quarter of each taxable year, (i) at least 50% of the value of the Fund's total assets must be represented by cash and cash items (including receivables), U.S. Government securities, the securities of other regulated investment companies, and other securities, with such other securities being limited in respect of any one issuer to an amount not greater than 5% of the market value of such Fund's total assets and not more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of such issuer, and (ii) not more than 25% of the value of the Fund's total assets may be invested in the securities of any one issuer (other than U.S. Government securities or the securities of other regulated investment companies), the securities of any two or more issuers (other than the securities of other regulated investment companies) that such Fund controls (by owning 20% or more of their outstanding voting stock) and that are determined to be engaged in the same or similar trades or businesses or related trades or businesses, or the securities of one or more qualified publicly traded partnerships. The Fund must also distribute each taxable year sufficient dividends to its shareholders to claim a dividends paid deduction equal to at least the sum of 90% of such Fund's investment company taxable income (which generally includes dividends, interest, and the excess of net short-term capital gain over net long-term capital loss) and 90% of such Fund's net tax-exempt interest, if any. Following the enactment of the Regulated Investment Company Act of 2010, if the Fund fails to satisfy these qualifying income and asset tests, and such failure was due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect, it may be permitted to "cure" such failures (and thereby not jeopardize its tax status as a regulated investment company) under certain circumstances.

If the Fund fails to qualify as a regulated investment company under Subchapter M of the Code in any fiscal year (and such failure is not subject to cure as discussed above), it will be treated as a corporation for federal income tax purposes. The Fund would be required to pay income taxes on its net investment income and net realized capital gains, if any, at the rates generally applicable to corporations. Shareholders of such Fund generally would not be liable for income tax on the Fund's net investment income or net realized capital gains in their individual capacities. Distributions to shareholders, whether from the Fund's net investment income or net realized capital gains, would be treated as taxable dividends to the extent of current or accumulated earnings and profits of such Fund.

In addition to the taxable year 90% distribution requirement described in the previous paragraph, and in order to avoid the imposition of a nondeductible 4% excise tax, the Fund must distribute (or be deemed to have distributed) by December 31 of each calendar year (i) at least 98% of its ordinary income for such year, (ii) at least 98.2% of the excess of its realized capital gains over its realized capital losses for the 12-month period ending on October 31 during such year, and (iii) any amounts from prior years that were not distributed and on which no federal income tax was paid. The Fund intend to declare and pay dividends and other distributions, as stated in the Prospectus.

Net investment income generally consists of interest and dividend income, less expenses. Net realized capital gains for a fiscal period are computed by taking into account any capital loss carryforward of the Fund.

Under recently enacted legislation, capital losses sustained and not used in a taxable year may be carried forward indefinitely to offset capital gains of the Fund in future years.

Distributions of net investment income and net realized capital gains by the Fund will be taxable to shareholders whether made in cash or reinvested by the Fund in shares. Shareholders receiving a distribution from the Fund in the form of additional shares will have a cost basis for federal income tax purposes in each share so received equal to the NAV of a share of the Fund on the reinvestment date. Fund distributions also will be included in individual and corporate shareholders' income on which the alternative minimum tax may be imposed.

The Fund or the securities dealer affecting a redemption of the Fund's shares by a shareholder will be required to file information reports with the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") with respect to distributions and payments made to the shareholder. In addition, the Fund will be required to withhold federal income tax on taxable dividends, redemptions and other payments made to accounts of individual or other non-exempt shareholders who have not furnished their correct taxpayer identification numbers and certain required certifications on the New Account application or with respect to which the Fund or the securities dealer has been notified by the IRS that the number furnished is incorrect or that the account is otherwise subject to withholding.

The Fund may receive dividend distributions from U.S. corporations. To the extent that the Fund receive such dividends and distributes them to its shareholders, and meets certain other requirements of the Code, corporate shareholders of the Fund may be entitled to the "dividends received" deduction. Availability of the deduction is subject to certain holding period and debt-financing limitations.

Distributions of net investment income and net short-term capital gains are taxable to shareholders as ordinary income or qualified dividend income. Under current law, distributions of certain qualified dividend income paid out of the Fund's investment company taxable income may be taxable to non-corporate shareholders at long-term capital gain rates, which are currently significantly lower than the highest rate that applies to ordinary income.

The Fund may be subject to foreign withholding taxes on dividends and interest earned with respect to securities of foreign corporations.

The use of hedging strategies, such as entering into futures contracts and forward contracts and purchasing options, involves complex rules that will determine the character and timing of recognition of the income received in connection therewith by the Fund. Income from foreign currencies (except certain gains therefrom that may be excluded by future regulations) and income from transactions in options, futures contracts and forward contracts derived by the Fund with respect to its business of investing in securities or foreign currencies will qualify as permissible income under Subchapter M of the Code.

For accounting purposes, when the Fund purchases an option, the premium paid by the Fund is recorded as an asset and is subsequently adjusted to the current market value of the option. Any gain or loss realized by the Fund upon the expiration or sale of such options held by the Fund generally will be capital gain or loss.

Any security, option, or other position entered into or held by the Fund that substantially diminishes the Fund's risk of loss from any other position held by the Fund may constitute a "straddle" for federal income tax purposes. In general, straddles are subject to certain rules that may affect the amount, character and timing of the Fund's gains and losses with respect to straddle positions by requiring, among other things, that the loss realized on disposition of one position of a straddle be deferred until gain is realized on disposition of the offsetting position; that the Fund's holding period in certain straddle positions not begin until the straddle is terminated (possibly resulting in the gain being treated as short-term capital gain rather than long-term capital gain); and that losses recognized with respect to certain straddle positions, which would otherwise constitute short-term capital losses, be treated as long-term capital losses. Different elections are available to the Fund that may mitigate the effects of the straddle rules.

Certain options, futures contracts and forward contracts that are subject to Section 1256 of the Code ("Section 1256 Contracts") and that are held by the Fund at the end of its taxable year generally will be required to be "marked to market" for federal income tax purposes, that is, deemed to have been sold at market value. Sixty percent of any net gain or loss recognized on these deemed sales and 60% of any net gain or loss realized from any actual sales of Section 1256 Contracts will be treated as long-term capital gain or loss, and the balance will be treated as short-term capital gain or loss.

Section 988 of the Code contains special tax rules applicable to certain foreign currency transactions that may affect the amount, timing and character of income, gain or loss recognized by the Fund. Under these rules, foreign exchange gain or loss realized with respect to foreign currency-denominated debt instruments, foreign currency forward

contracts, foreign currency denominated payables and receivables and foreign currency options and futures contracts (other than options and futures contracts that are governed by the mark-to-market and 60/40 rules of Section 1256 of the Code and for which no election is made) is treated as ordinary income or loss. Some part of the Fund's gain or loss on the sale or other disposition of shares of a foreign corporation may, because of changes in foreign currency exchange rates, be treated as ordinary income or loss under Section 988 of the Code rather than as capital gain or loss.

A shareholder who purchases shares of the Fund by tendering payment for the shares in the form of other securities may be required to recognize gain or loss for income tax purposes on the difference, if any, between the adjusted basis of the securities tendered to the fund and the purchase price of the Fund's shares acquired by the shareholder.

Section 475 of the Code requires that a "dealer" in securities must generally "mark to market" at the end of its taxable year all securities which it owns. The resulting gain or loss is treated as ordinary (and not capital) gain or loss, except to the extent allocable to periods during which the dealer held the security for investment. The "mark to market" rules do not apply, however, to a security held for investment which is clearly identified in the dealer's records as being held for investment before the end of the day in which the security was acquired. The IRS has issued guidance under Section 475 that provides that, for example, a bank that regularly originates and sells loans is a dealer in securities, and subject to the "mark to market" rules. Shares of the Fund held by a dealer in securities will be subject to the "mark to market" rules unless they are held by the dealer for investment and the dealer property identifies the shares as held for investment.

Redemptions of shares of the Fund will result in gains or losses for tax purposes to the extent of the difference between the proceeds and the shareholder's adjusted tax basis for the shares. Any loss realized upon the redemption of shares within six months from their date of purchase will be treated as a long-term capital loss to the extent of distributions of long-term capital gain dividends during such six-month period. All or a portion of a loss realized upon the redemption of shares may be disallowed to the extent shares are purchased (including shares acquired by means of reinvested dividends) within 30 days before or after such redemption.

Distributions and redemptions may be subject to state and local income taxes, and the treatment thereof may differ from the federal income tax treatment. Foreign taxes may apply to non-U.S. investors.

Nonresident aliens and foreign persons are subject to different tax rules, and may be subject to withholding of up to 30% on certain payments received from the Fund. Shareholders are advised to consult with their own tax advisers concerning the application of foreign, federal, state and local taxes to an investment in the Fund.

#### Options, Futures, Forward Contracts and Swap Agreements

To the extent such investments are permissible for the Fund, the Fund's transactions in options, futures contracts, hedging transactions, forward contracts, straddles and foreign currencies will be subject to special tax rules (including mark-to-market, constructive sale, straddle, wash sale and short sale rules), the effect of which may be to accelerate income to the Fund, defer losses to the Fund, cause adjustments in the holding periods of the Fund's securities, convert long-term capital gains into short-term capital gains and convert short-term capital losses into long-term capital losses. These rules could therefore affect the amount, timing and character of distributions to shareholders.

To the extent such investments are permissible, certain of the Fund's hedging activities (including its transactions, if any, in foreign currencies or foreign currency-denominated instruments) are likely to produce a difference between its book income and its taxable income. If the Fund's book income exceeds its taxable income, the distribution (if any) of such excess book income will be treated as (i) a dividend to the extent of the Fund's remaining earnings and profits (including earnings and profits arising from tax-exempt income), (ii) thereafter, as a return of capital to the extent of the recipient's basis in the shares, and (iii) thereafter, as gain from the sale or exchange of a capital asset.

If the Fund's book income is less than taxable income, the Fund could be required to make distributions exceeding book income to qualify as a regulated investment company that is accorded special tax treatment.

#### Passive Foreign Investment Companies

Investment by the Fund in certain "passive foreign investment companies" ("PFICs") could subject the Fund to a U.S. federal income tax (including interest charges) on distributions received from the company or on proceeds received from the disposition of shares in the company, which tax cannot be eliminated by making distributions to Fund shareholders. However, the Fund may elect to treat a PFIC as a "qualified electing fund" ("QEF"), in which case the Fund will be required to include its share of the company's income and net capital gains annually, regardless of whether it receives any distribution from the company.

The Fund also may make an election to mark the gains (and to a limited extent losses) in such holdings "to the market" as though it had sold and repurchased its holdings in those PFICs on the last day of the Fund's taxable year. Such gains and losses are treated as ordinary income and loss. The QEF and mark-to-market elections may accelerate the recognition of income (without the receipt of cash) and increase the amount required to be distributed for the Fund to avoid taxation. Making either of these elections therefore may require the Fund to liquidate other investments (including when it is not advantageous to do so) to meet its distribution requirement, which also may accelerate the recognition of gain and affect the Fund's total return.

#### Foreign Currency Transactions

The Fund's transactions in foreign currencies, foreign currency-denominated debt securities and certain foreign currency options, futures contracts and forward contracts (and similar instruments) may give rise to ordinary income or loss to the extent such income or loss results from fluctuations in the value of the foreign currency concerned.

#### Foreign Taxation

Income received by the Fund from sources within foreign countries may be subject to withholding and other taxes imposed by such countries. Tax treaties and conventions between certain countries and the U.S. may reduce or eliminate such taxes. If more than 50% of the value of the Fund's total assets at the close of its taxable year consists of securities of foreign corporations, the Fund may be able to elect to "pass through" to its shareholders the amount of eligible foreign income and similar taxes paid by the Fund. If this election is made, a shareholder generally subject to tax will be required to include in gross income (in addition to taxable dividends actually received) his or her pro rata share of the foreign taxes paid by the Fund, and may be entitled either to deduct (as an itemized deduction) his or her pro rata share of foreign taxes in computing his or her taxable income or to use it as a foreign tax credit against his or her U.S. federal income tax liability, subject to certain limitations. In particular, a shareholder must hold his or her shares (without protection from risk of loss) on the ex-dividend date and for at least 15 more days during the 30-day period surrounding the ex-dividend date to be eligible to claim a foreign tax credit with respect to a gain dividend. No deduction for foreign taxes may be claimed by a shareholder who does not itemize deductions. Each shareholder will be notified within 60 days after the close of the Fund's taxable year whether the foreign taxes paid by the Fund will "pass through" for that year.

Generally, a credit for foreign taxes is subject to the limitation that it may not exceed the shareholder's U.S. tax attributable to his or her total foreign source taxable income. For this purpose, if the pass-through election is made, the source of the Fund's income will flow through to shareholders of the Fund. With respect to the Fund, gains from the sale of securities will be treated as derived from U.S. sources and certain currency fluctuation gains, including fluctuation gains from foreign currency-denominated debt securities, receivables and payables will be treated as ordinary income derived from U.S. sources. The limitation on the foreign tax credit is applied separately to foreign source passive income, and to certain other types of income. A shareholder may be unable to claim a credit for the full amount of his or her proportionate share of the foreign taxes paid by the Fund. The foreign tax

credit can be used to offset only 90% of the revised alternative minimum tax imposed on corporations and individuals and foreign taxes generally are not deductible in computing alternative minimum taxable income.

#### Original Issue Discount and Pay-In-Kind Securities

Current federal tax law requires the holder of a U.S. Treasury or other fixed income zero coupon security to accrue as income each year a portion of the discount at which the security was purchased, even though the holder receives no interest payment in cash on the security during the year. In addition, pay-in-kind securities will give rise to income, which is required to be distributed and is taxable even though the Fund holding the security receives no interest payment in cash on the security during the year.

Some of the debt securities (with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance) that may be acquired by the Fund may be treated as debt securities that are issued originally at a discount. Generally, the amount of the original issue discount (“OID”) is treated as interest income and is included in income over the term of the debt security, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, usually when the debt security matures. A portion of the OID includable in income with respect to certain high-yield corporate debt securities (including certain pay-in-kind securities) may be treated as a dividend for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

In addition, the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act requires that taxpayers, such as the Fund, that use an accrual method of accounting for U.S. federal income tax purposes are generally required to include certain amounts in income no later than the time such amounts are reflected on such taxpayer’s applicable financial statements. Certain fees treated as OID may be included as income for financial statement purposes when received (as opposed to being accrued into income over the term of the debt instrument), which may thus require such amounts be treated as taxable income of the Fund upon their receipt.

Some of the debt securities (with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance) that may be acquired by the Fund in the secondary market may be treated as having market discount. Generally, any gain recognized on the disposition of, and any partial payment of principal on, a debt security having market discount is treated as ordinary income to the extent the gain, or principal payment, does not exceed the “accrued market discount” on such debt security. Market discount generally accrues in equal daily installments. The Fund may make one or more of the elections applicable to debt securities having market discount, which could affect the character and timing of recognition of income.

Some debt securities (with a fixed maturity date of one year or less from the date of issuance) that may be acquired by the Fund may be treated as having acquisition discount, or OID in the case of certain types of debt securities. Generally, the Fund will be required to include the acquisition discount, or OID, in income over the term of the debt security, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, usually when the debt security matures. The Fund may make one or more of the elections applicable to debt securities having acquisition discount, or OID, which could affect the character and timing of recognition of income.

If the Fund holds the foregoing kinds of securities, it may be required to pay out as an income distribution each year an amount that is greater than the total amount of cash interest the Fund actually received. Such distributions may be made from the cash assets of the Fund or by liquidation of portfolio securities, if necessary (including when it is not advantageous to do so). The Fund may realize gains or losses from such liquidations. In the event the Fund realizes net capital gains from such transactions, its shareholders may receive a larger capital gain distribution, if any, than they would in the absence of such transactions.

Shareholders of the Fund may be subject to state and local taxes on distributions received from the Fund and on redemptions of the Fund’s shares.

A brief explanation of the form and character of the distribution accompanies each distribution. In January of each year the Fund issues to each shareholder a statement of the federal income tax status of all distributions.

Shareholders should consult their tax advisors about the application of federal, state and local and foreign tax law in light of their particular situation.

### **Dividends and Distributions**

The Fund will receive income in the form of dividends and interest earned on its investments in securities. This income, less the expenses incurred in its operations, is the Fund's net investment income, substantially all of which will be declared as dividends to the Fund's shareholders.

The amount of income dividend payments by the Fund is dependent upon the amount of net investment income received by the Fund from its portfolio holdings, is not guaranteed and is subject to the discretion of the Board. The Fund does not pay "interest" or guarantee any fixed rate of return on an investment in its shares.

The Fund also may derive capital gains or losses in connection with sales or other dispositions of its portfolio securities. Any net gain the Fund may realize from transactions involving investments held less than the period required for long-term capital gain or loss recognition or otherwise producing short-term capital gains and losses, although a distribution from capital gains, will be distributed to shareholders with and as a part of dividends giving rise to ordinary income. If during any year the Fund realizes a net gain on transactions involving investments held more than the period required for long-term capital gain or loss recognition or otherwise producing long-term capital gains and losses, the Fund will have a net long-term capital gain. For more information concerning applicable capital gains tax rates, see your tax advisor.

Any dividend or distribution paid by the Fund reduces the Fund's NAV per share on the date paid by the amount of the dividend or distribution per share. Accordingly, a dividend or distribution paid shortly after a purchase of shares by a shareholder would represent, in substance, a partial return of capital (to the extent it is paid on the shares so purchased), even though it would be subject to income taxes.

Dividends and other distributions will be made in the form of additional shares of the Fund unless the shareholder has otherwise indicated. Investors have the right to change their elections with respect to the reinvestment of dividends and distributions by notifying the Transfer Agent in writing, but any such change will be effective only as to dividends and other distributions for which the record date is seven or more business days after the Transfer Agent has received the written request.

There are and will likely continue to be proposals for amendments to federal income tax laws that could, if enacted, have adverse effects on the Fund, their investments or their shareholders. Shareholders should consult their tax advisors about the application of federal, state and local and foreign tax law in light of their particular situation.

The above discussion and the related discussion in the Prospectus are not intended to be complete discussions of all applicable federal tax consequences of an investment in the Fund. Alston & Bird LLP has expressed no opinion in respect thereof.

### **Financial Statements**

The Predecessor Fund's annual report to shareholders for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2023, is available, without charge, upon request by calling (855) 580-0900 and the financial statements, accompanying notes and report of the independent registered public accounting firm appearing therein are incorporated by reference into this SAI.

## APPENDIX “A” RATINGS DEFINITIONS

### Standard & Poor’s Issue Credit Rating Definitions

A Standard & Poor’s issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific financial obligation, a specific class of financial obligations, or a specific financial program (including ratings on medium-term note programs and commercial paper programs). It takes into consideration the creditworthiness of guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation and takes into account the currency in which the obligation is denominated. The opinion reflects Standard & Poor’s view of the obligor’s capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due, and may assess terms, such as collateral security and subordination, which could affect ultimate payment in the event of default.

Issue credit ratings can be either long term or short term. Short-term ratings are generally assigned to those obligations considered short-term in the relevant market. In the U.S., for example, that means obligations with an original maturity of no more than 365 days—including commercial paper. Short-term ratings are also used to indicate the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to put features on long-term obligations. The result is a dual rating, in which the short-term rating addresses the put feature, in addition to the usual long-term rating. Medium-term notes are assigned long-term ratings.

#### Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings

##### **A-1**

A short-term obligation rated ‘A-1’ is rated in the highest category by Standard & Poor’s. The obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations is extremely strong.

##### **A-2**

A short-term obligation rated ‘A-2’ is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is satisfactory.

##### **A-3**

A short-term obligation rated ‘A-3’ exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

##### **B**

A short-term obligation rated ‘B’ is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. Ratings of ‘B-1’, ‘B-2’, and ‘B-3’ may be assigned to indicate finer distinctions within the ‘B’ category. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties which could lead to the obligor’s inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**B-1**

A short-term obligation rated 'B-1' is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics, but the obligor has a relatively stronger capacity to meet its financial commitments over the short-term compared to other speculative-grade obligors.

**B-2**

A short-term obligation rated 'B-2' is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics, and the obligor has an average speculative-grade capacity to meet its financial commitments over the short-term compared to other speculative-grade obligors.

**B-3**

A short-term obligation rated 'B-3' is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics, and the obligor has a relatively weaker capacity to meet its financial commitments over the short-term compared to other speculative-grade obligors.

**C**

A short-term obligation rated 'C' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**D**

A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in payment default. The 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation, including a regulatory capital instrument, are not made on the date due even if the applicable grace period has not expired, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made during such grace period. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action if payments on an obligation are jeopardized.

**SPUR (Standard & Poor's Underlying Rating)**

This is a rating of a stand-alone capacity of an issue to pay debt service on a credit-enhanced debt issue, without giving effect to the enhancement that applies to it. These ratings are published only at the request of the debt issuer/obligor with the designation SPUR to distinguish them from the credit-enhanced rating that applies to the debt issue. Standard & Poor's maintains surveillance of an issue with a published SPUR.

**Dual Ratings**

Standard & Poor's assigns "dual" ratings to all debt issues that have a put option or demand feature as part of their structure. The first rating addresses the likelihood of repayment of principal and interest as due, and the second rating addresses only the demand feature. The long-term rating symbols are used for bonds to denote the long-term maturity and the short-term rating symbols for the put option (for example, 'AAA/A-1+'). With U.S. municipal short-term demand debt, note rating symbols are used with the short-term issue credit rating symbols (for example, 'SP-1+/A-1+').

The ratings and other credit related opinions of Standard & Poor's and its affiliates are statements of opinion as of the date they are expressed and not statements of fact or recommendations to purchase, hold, or sell any securities or make any investment decisions. Standard & Poor's assumes no obligation to update any information following publication. Users of ratings and credit related opinions should not rely on them in making any investment decision. Standard & Poor's opinions and analyses do not address the suitability of any security. Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC does not act as a fiduciary or an investment advisor. While Standard & Poor's has obtained information from sources it believes to be reliable, Standard & Poor's does not perform an audit and undertakes no duty of due diligence or independent verification of any information it receives. Ratings and credit related opinions may be changed, suspended, or withdrawn at any time.



## **Active Qualifiers (Currently applied and/or outstanding)**

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### **i**

This subscript is used for issues in which the credit factors, terms, or both, that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of interest are different from the credit factors, terms or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of principal on the obligation. The ‘i’ subscript indicates that the rating addresses the interest portion of the obligation only. The ‘i’ subscript will always be used in conjunction with the ‘p’ subscript, which addresses likelihood of receipt of principal. For example, a rated obligation could be assigned ratings of “AAA<sub>p</sub> NR<sub>i</sub>” indicating that the principal portion is rated “AAA” and the interest portion of the obligation is not rated.

### **L**

Ratings qualified with ‘L’ apply only to amounts invested up to federal deposit insurance limits.

### **p**

This subscript is used for issues in which the credit factors, the terms, or both, that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of principal are different from the credit factors, terms or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of interest on the obligation. The ‘p’ subscript indicates that the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only. The ‘p’ subscript will always be used in conjunction with the ‘i’ subscript, which addresses likelihood of receipt of interest. For example, a rated obligation could be assigned ratings of “AAA<sub>p</sub> NR<sub>i</sub>” indicating that the principal portion is rated “AAA” and the interest portion of the obligation is not rated.

### **pi**

Ratings with a ‘pi’ subscript are based on an analysis of an issuer’s published financial information, as well as additional information in the public domain. They do not, however, reflect in-depth meetings with an issuer’s management and therefore may be based on less comprehensive information than ratings without a ‘pi’ subscript. Ratings with a ‘pi’ subscript are reviewed annually based on a new year’s financial statements, but may be reviewed on an interim basis if a major event occurs that may affect the issuer’s credit quality.

### **pr**

The letters ‘pr’ indicate that the rating is provisional. A provisional rating assumes the successful completion of the project financed by the debt being rated and indicates that payment of debt service requirements is largely or entirely dependent upon the successful, timely completion of the project. This rating, however, while addressing credit quality subsequent to completion of the project, makes no comment on the likelihood of or the risk of default upon failure of such completion. The investor should exercise his own judgment with respect to such likelihood and risk.

### **preliminary**

Preliminary ratings are assigned to issues, including financial programs, in the following circumstances.

- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations, most commonly structured and project finance issues, pending receipt of final documentation and legal opinions. Assignment of a final rating is conditional on the receipt and approval by Standard & Poor’s of appropriate documentation. Changes in the information provided to Standard & Poor’s could result in the assignment of a different rating. In addition, Standard & Poor’s reserves the right not to issue a final rating.
- Preliminary ratings are assigned to Rule 415 Shelf Registrations. As specific issues, with defined terms, are offered from the master registration, a final rating may be assigned to them in accordance with Standard & Poor’s policies. The final rating may differ from the preliminary rating.

**t**

This symbol indicates termination structures that are designed to honor their contracts to full maturity or, should certain events occur, to terminate and cash settle all their contracts before their final maturity date.

**unsolicited**

Unsolicited ratings are those credit ratings assigned at the initiative of Standard & Poor's and not at the request of the issuer or its agents.

**Inactive Qualifiers (No longer applied or outstanding)**

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This symbol indicated continuance of the ratings is contingent upon Standard & Poor's receipt of an executed copy of the escrow agreement or closing documentation confirming investments and cash flows. Discontinued use in August 1998.

**c**

This qualifier was used to provide additional information to investors that the bank may terminate its obligation to purchase tendered bonds if the long-term credit rating of the issuer is below an investment-grade level and/or the issuer's bonds are deemed taxable. Discontinued use in January 2001.

**q**

A 'q' subscript indicates that the rating is based solely on quantitative analysis of publicly available information. Discontinued use in April 2001.

**r**

The 'r' modifier was assigned to securities containing extraordinary risks, particularly market risks, that are not covered in the credit rating. The absence of an 'r' modifier should not be taken as an indication that an obligation will not exhibit extraordinary non-credit related risks. Standard & Poor's discontinued the use of the 'r' modifier for most obligations in June 2000 and for the balance of obligations (mainly structured finance transactions) in November 2002.

**Local Currency and Foreign Currency Risks**

Country risk considerations are a standard part of Standard & Poor's analysis for credit ratings on any issuer or issue. Currency of repayment is a key factor in this analysis. An obligor's capacity to repay foreign currency obligations may be lower than its capacity to repay obligations in its local currency due to the sovereign government's own relatively lower capacity to repay external versus domestic debt. These sovereign risk considerations are incorporated in the debt ratings assigned to specific issues. Foreign currency issuer ratings are also distinguished from local currency issuer ratings to identify those instances where sovereign risks make them different for the same issuer.

## **Moody's Credit Rating Definitions**

### **Purpose**

The system of rating securities was originated by John Moody in 1909. The purpose of Moody's ratings is to provide investors with a simple system of gradation by which relative creditworthiness of securities may be noted.

### **Rating Symbols**

Gradations of creditworthiness are indicated by rating symbols, with each symbol representing a group in which the credit characteristics are broadly the same. There are nine symbols as shown below, from that used to designate least credit risk to that denoting greatest credit risk:

### **Aaa Aa A Baa Ba B Caa Ca C**

Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa.

### **Absence of a Rating**

Where no rating has been assigned or where a rating has been withdrawn, it may be for reasons unrelated to the creditworthiness of the issue.

Should no rating be assigned, the reason may be one of the following:

1. An application was not received or accepted.
2. The issue or issuer belongs to a group of securities or entities that are not rated as a matter of policy.
3. There is a lack of essential data pertaining to the issue or issuer.
4. The issue was privately placed, in which case the rating is not published in Moody's publications.

Withdrawal may occur if new and material circumstances arise, the effects of which preclude satisfactory analysis; if there is no longer available reasonable up-to-date data to permit a judgment to be formed; if a bond is called for redemption; or for other reasons.

### **Changes in Rating**

The credit quality of most issuers and their obligations is not fixed and steady over a period of time, but tends to undergo change. For this reason, changes in ratings occur so as to reflect variations in the intrinsic relative position of issuers and their obligations.

A change in rating may thus occur at any time in the case of an individual issue. Such rating change should serve notice that Moody's observes some alteration in creditworthiness, or that the previous rating did not fully reflect the quality of the bond as now seen. While because of their very nature, changes are to be expected more frequently among bonds of lower ratings than among bonds of higher ratings. Nevertheless, the user of bond ratings should keep close and constant check on all ratings — both high and low — to be able to note promptly any signs of change in status that may occur.

### **Limitations to Uses of Ratings\***

Obligations carrying the same rating are not claimed to be of absolutely equal credit quality. In a broad sense, they are alike in position, but since there are a limited number of rating classes used in grading thousands of bonds, the symbols cannot reflect the same shadings of risk which actually exist.

As ratings are designed exclusively for the purpose of grading obligations according to their credit quality, they should not be used alone as a basis for investment operations. For example, they have no value in forecasting the direction of future trends of market price. Market price movements in bonds are influenced not only by the credit quality of individual issues but also by changes in money rates and general economic trends, as well as by the length of maturity, etc. During its life even the highest rated bond may have wide price movements, while its high rating status remains unchanged.

The matter of market price has no bearing whatsoever on the determination of ratings, which are not to be construed as recommendations with respect to “attractiveness”. The attractiveness of a given bond may depend on its yield, its maturity date or other factors for which the investor may search, as well as on its credit quality, the only characteristic to which the rating refers.

Since ratings involve judgments about the future, on the one hand, and since they are used by investors as a means of protection, on the other, the effort is made when assigning ratings to look at “worst” possibilities in the “visible” future, rather than solely at the past record and the status of the present. Therefore, investors using the rating should not expect to find in them a reflection of statistical factors alone, since they are an appraisal of long-term risks, including the recognition of many non-statistical factors.

Though ratings may be used by the banking authorities to classify bonds in their bank examination procedure, Moody’s ratings are not made with these bank regulations in mind. Moody’s Investors Service’s own judgment as to the desirability or non-desirability of a bond for bank investment purposes is not indicated by Moody’s ratings.

Moody’s ratings represent the opinion of Moody’s Investors Service as to the relative creditworthiness of securities. As such, they should be used in conjunction with the descriptions and statistics appearing in Moody’s publications. Reference should be made to these statements for information regarding the issuer. Moody’s ratings are not commercial credit ratings. In no case is default or receivership to be imputed unless expressly stated.

\*As set forth more fully on the copyright, credit ratings are, and must be construed solely as, statements of opinion and not statements of fact or recommendations to purchase, sell or hold any securities. Each rating or other opinion must be weighed solely as one factor in any investment decision made by or on behalf of any user of the information, and each such user must accordingly make its own study and evaluation of each security and of each issuer and guarantor of, and each provider of credit support for, each security that it may consider purchasing, selling or holding.

### **Short-Term Ratings**

Moody’s short-term ratings are opinions of the ability of issuers to honor short-term financial obligations. Ratings may be assigned to issuers, short-term programs or to individual short-term debt instruments. Such obligations generally have an original maturity not exceeding thirteen months, unless explicitly noted.

Moody’s employs the following designations to indicate the relative repayment ability of rated issuers:

#### **P-1**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-1 have a superior ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**P-2**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-2 have a strong ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**P-3**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-3 have an acceptable ability to repay short-term obligations.

**NP**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Not Prime do not fall within any of the Prime rating categories.

**Note:** Canadian issuers rated P-1 or P-2 have their short-term ratings enhanced by the senior-most long-term rating of the issuer, its guarantor or support-provider.

### Short-term vs. Long-term Ratings

Long Term	Short Term
<b>Investment Grade</b> Aaa Aa1 Aa2 Aa3 A1 A2 A3 Baa1 Baa2 Baa3	<b>Prime-1</b>    <b>Prime-2</b>  <b>Prime-3</b>
<b>Speculative Grade</b> Ba1 Ba2 Ba3 B1 B2 B3 Caa1 Caa2 Caa3 Ca C	<b>Not Prime</b>

## Fitch's National Credit Ratings

For those countries in which foreign and local currency sovereign ratings are below 'AAA', and where there is demand for such ratings, Fitch Ratings will provide National Ratings. It is important to note that each National Rating scale is unique and is defined to serve the needs of the local market in question.

The National Rating scale provides a relative measure of creditworthiness for rated entities only within the country concerned. Under this rating scale, a 'AAA' Long-Term National Rating will be assigned to the lowest relative risk within that country, which, in most but not all cases, will be the sovereign state.

The National Rating scale merely ranks the degree of perceived risk relative to the lowest default risk in that same country. Like local currency ratings, National Ratings exclude the effects of sovereign and transfer risk and exclude the possibility that investors may be unable to repatriate any due interest and principal repayments. It is not related to the rating scale of any other national market. Comparisons between different national scales or between an individual national scale and the international rating scale are therefore inappropriate and potentially misleading. Consequently, they are identified by the addition of a special identifier for the country concerned, such as 'AAA(arg)' for National Ratings in Argentina.

In certain countries, regulators have established credit rating scales, to be used within their domestic markets, using specific nomenclature. In these countries, the agency's National Short-Term Rating definitions for 'F1+(xxx)', 'F1(xxx)', 'F2(xxx)' and 'F3(xxx)' may be substituted by the regulatory scales, e.g. 'A1+', 'A1', 'A2' and 'A3'. The below definitions thus serve as a template, but users should consult the individual scales for each country listed on the agency's web-site to determine if any additional or alternative category definitions apply.

### National Short-Term Credit Ratings

#### **F1(xxx)**

Indicates the strongest capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Under the agency's National Rating scale, this rating is assigned to the lowest default risk relative to others in the same country. Where the liquidity profile is particularly strong, a "+" is added to the assigned rating.

#### **F2(xxx)**

Indicates a good capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. However, the margin of safety is not as great as in the case of the higher ratings.

#### **F3(xxx)**

Indicates an adequate capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. However, such capacity is more susceptible to near-term adverse changes than for financial commitments in higher rated categories.

#### **B(xxx)**

Indicates an uncertain capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Such capacity is highly susceptible to near-term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.

**C(xxx)**

Indicates a highly uncertain capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Capacity for meeting financial commitments is solely reliant upon a sustained, favorable business and economic environment.

**D(xxx)**

Indicates actual or imminent payment default.

**Notes to Long-Term and Short-Term National Ratings:**

The ISO country code suffix is placed in parentheses immediately following the rating letters to indicate the identity of the National market within which the rating applies. For illustrative purposes, (xxx) has been used.

“+” or “-” may be appended to a National Rating to denote relative status within a major rating category. Such suffixes are not added to the ‘AAA(xxx)’ Long-Term National Rating category, to categories below ‘CCC(xxx)’, or to Short-Term National Ratings other than ‘F1(xxx)’.

## LONG-TERM RATINGS

### Standard & Poor's Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings

Issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on Standard & Poor's analysis of the following considerations:

- Likelihood of payment—capacity and willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on an obligation in accordance with the terms of the obligation;
- Nature of and provisions of the obligation;
- Protection afforded by, and relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under the laws of bankruptcy and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

Issue ratings are an assessment of default risk, but may incorporate an assessment of relative seniority or ultimate recovery in the event of default. Junior obligations are typically rated lower than senior obligations, to reflect the lower priority in bankruptcy, as noted above. (Such differentiation may apply when an entity has both senior and subordinated obligations, secured and unsecured obligations, or operating company and holding company obligations.)

#### **AAA**

An obligation rated 'AAA' has the highest rating assigned by Standard & Poor's. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is extremely strong.

#### **AA**

An obligation rated 'AA' differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is very strong.

#### **A**

An obligation rated 'A' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is still strong.

#### **BBB**

An obligation rated 'BBB' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

#### **BB, B, CCC, CC, and C**

Obligations rated 'BB', 'B', 'CCC', 'CC', and 'C' are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. 'BB' indicates the least degree of speculation and 'C' the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposures to adverse conditions.



**BB**

An obligation rated 'BB' is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions which could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**B**

An obligation rated 'B' is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated 'BB', but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**CCC**

An obligation rated 'CCC' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment, and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**CC**

An obligation rated 'CC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment.

**C**

A 'C' rating is assigned to obligations that are currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, obligations that have payment arrearages allowed by the terms of the documents, or obligations of an issuer that is the subject of a bankruptcy petition or similar action which have not experienced a payment default. Among others, the 'C' rating may be assigned to subordinated debt, preferred stock or other obligations on which cash payments have been suspended in accordance with the instrument's terms or when preferred stock is the subject of a distressed exchange offer, whereby some or all of the issue is either repurchased for an amount of cash or replaced by other instruments having a total value that is less than par.

**D**

An obligation rated 'D' is in payment default. The 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation, including a regulatory capital instrument, are not made on the date due even if the applicable grace period has not expired, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made during such grace period. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action if payments on an obligation are jeopardized. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' upon completion of a distressed exchange offer, whereby some or all of the issue is either repurchased for an amount of cash or replaced by other instruments having a total value that is less than par.

**Plus (+) or minus (-)**

The ratings from 'AA' to 'CCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

**NR**

This indicates that no rating has been requested, that there is insufficient information on which to base a rating, or that Standard & Poor's does not rate a particular obligation as a matter of policy.

*See active and inactive qualifiers following Standard & Poor's Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings beginning on page A-3.*

## **Moody's Long-Term Debt Ratings**

### **Long-Term Obligation Ratings**

Moody's long-term obligation ratings are opinions of the relative credit risk of fixed-income obligations with an original maturity of one year or more. They address the possibility that a financial obligation will not be honored as promised. Such ratings reflect both the likelihood of default and any financial loss suffered in the event of default.

### **Moody's Long-Term Rating Definitions:**

#### **Aaa**

Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, with minimal credit risk.

#### **Aa**

Obligations rated Aa are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

#### **A**

Obligations rated A are considered upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

#### **Baa**

Obligations rated Baa are subject to moderate credit risk. They are considered medium-grade and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

#### **Ba**

Obligations rated Ba are judged to have speculative elements and are subject to substantial credit risk.

#### **B**

Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

#### **Caa**

Obligations rated Caa are judged to be of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

#### **Ca**

Obligations rated Ca are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

#### **C**

Obligations rated C are the lowest rated class of bonds and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

**Note:** Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category.

## **Fitch's National Long-Term Credit Ratings**

### **AAA(xxx)**

'AAA' National Ratings denote the highest rating assigned by the agency in its National Rating scale for that country. This rating is assigned to issuers or obligations with the lowest expectation of default risk relative to all other issuers or obligations in the same country.

### **AA(xxx)**

'AA' National Ratings denote expectations of very low default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. The default risk inherent differs only slightly from that of the country's highest rated issuers or obligations.

### **A(xxx)**

'A' National Ratings denote expectations of low default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. However, changes in circumstances or economic conditions may affect the capacity for timely repayment to a greater degree than is the case for financial commitments denoted by a higher rated category.

### **BBB(xxx)**

'BBB' National Ratings denote a moderate default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. However, changes in circumstances or economic conditions are more likely to affect the capacity for timely repayment than is the case for financial commitments denoted by a higher rated category.

### **BB(xxx)**

'BB' National Ratings denote an elevated default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Within the context of the country, payment is uncertain to some degree and capacity for timely repayment remains more vulnerable to adverse economic change over time.

### **B(xxx)**

'B' National Ratings denote a significantly elevated default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Financial commitments are currently being met but a limited margin of safety remains and capacity for continued timely payments is contingent upon a sustained, favorable business and economic environment. For individual obligations, may indicate distressed or defaulted obligations with potential for extremely high recoveries.

### **CCC(xxx)**

'CCC' National Ratings denote that default is a real possibility. Capacity for meeting financial commitments is solely reliant upon sustained, favorable business or economic conditions.

### **CC(xxx)**

'CC' National Ratings denote that default of some kind appears probable.

### **C(xxx)**

'C' National Ratings denote that default is imminent.

### **D(xxx)**

'D' National Ratings denote an issuer or instrument that is currently in default.

**Notes to Long-Term and Short-Term National Ratings:**

The ISO country code suffix is placed in parentheses immediately following the rating letters to indicate the identity of the National market within which the rating applies. For illustrative purposes, (xxx) has been used.

“+” or “-” may be appended to a National Rating to denote relative status within a major rating category. Such suffixes are not added to the ‘AAA(xxx)’ Long-Term National Rating category, to categories below ‘CCC(xxx)’, or to Short-Term National Ratings other than ‘F1(xxx)’.

## **MUNICIPAL NOTE RATINGS**

### **Standard & Poor's Municipal Short-Term Note Ratings Definitions**

A Standard & Poor's U.S. municipal note rating reflects Standard & Poor's opinion about the liquidity factors and market access risks unique to the notes. Notes due in three years or less will likely receive a note rating. Notes with an original maturity of more than three years will most likely receive a long-term debt rating. In determining which type of rating, if any, to assign, Standard & Poor's analysis will review the following considerations:

- Amortization schedule—the larger the final maturity relative to other maturities, the more likely it will be treated as a note; and
- Source of payment—the more dependent the issue is on the market for its refinancing, the more likely it will be treated as a note.

Note rating symbols are as follows:

#### **SP-1**

Strong capacity to pay principal and interest. An issue determined to possess a very strong capacity to pay debt service is given a plus (+) designation.

#### **SP-2**

Satisfactory capacity to pay principal and interest, with some vulnerability to adverse financial and economic changes over the term of the notes.

#### **SP-3**

Speculative capacity to pay principal and interest.

*See active and inactive qualifiers following Standard & Poor's Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings beginning on page A-3.*

### **Moody's US Municipal Short-Term Debt And Demand Obligation Ratings**

#### **Short-Term Debt Ratings**

There are three rating categories for short-term municipal obligations that are considered investment grade. These ratings are designated as Municipal Investment Grade (MIG) and are divided into three levels -- MIG 1 through MIG 3. In addition, those short-term obligations that are of speculative quality are designated SG, or speculative grade. MIG ratings expire at the maturity of the obligation.

#### **MIG 1**

This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by established cash flows, highly reliable liquidity support, or demonstrated broad-based access to the market for refinancing.

#### **MIG 2**

This designation denotes strong credit quality. Margins of protection are ample, although not as large as in the preceding group.

**MIG 3**

This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Liquidity and cash-flow protection may be narrow, and market access for refinancing is likely to be less well-established.

**SG**

This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Debt instruments in this category may lack sufficient margins of protection.

**Demand Obligation Ratings**

In the case of variable rate demand obligations (VRDOs), a two-component rating is assigned; a long or short-term debt rating and a demand obligation rating. The first element represents Moody's evaluation of the degree of risk associated with scheduled principal and interest payments. The second element represents Moody's evaluation of the degree of risk associated with the ability to receive purchase price upon demand ("demand feature"), using a variation of the MIG rating scale, the Variable Municipal Investment Grade or VMIG rating.

When either the long- or short-term aspect of a VRDO is not rated, that piece is designated NR, e.g., Aaa/NR or NR/VMIG 1.

VMIG rating expirations are a function of each issue's specific structural or credit features.

**VMIG 1**

This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by the superior short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

**VMIG 2**

This designation denotes strong credit quality. Good protection is afforded by the strong short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

**VMIG 3**

This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Adequate protection is afforded by the satisfactory short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

**SG**

This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Demand features rated in this category may be supported by a liquidity provider that does not have an investment grade short-term rating or may lack the structural and/or legal protections necessary to ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

## APPENDIX “B” Proxy Voting Policy

### NORTH STAR INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION PROXY VOTING PROCEDURES

#### A. **Responsibility of Advisor to Vote Proxies - Advisor’s Proxy Voting Policies and Principles**

Advisor’s proxy voting positions have been developed based on years of experience with proxy voting and corporate governance issues. These principles have been reviewed by various members of Advisor’s organization, including portfolio management, legal counsel, and Advisor’s officers. The Board of Directors of Advisor will approve the proxy voting policies and procedures annually.

#### B. **How Advisor Votes Proxies - Fiduciary Considerations**

Advisor does not consider recommendations from any other third party to be determinative of Advisor’s ultimate decision. As a matter of policy, the officers, directors and employees of Advisor will not be influenced by outside sources whose interests conflict with the interests of Advisory Clients.

#### C. **Conflicts of Interest**

All conflicts of interest will be resolved in the interests of the Advisory Clients. In situations where Advisor perceives a material conflict of interest, Advisor will disclose the conflict to the relevant Advisory Clients. In these cases, the Advisor will defer to the voting recommendation of an independent third party provider of proxy services, send the proxy directly to the relevant Advisory Clients for a voting decision, or take such other action in good faith (in consultation with counsel) which would protect the interests of the Advisory Clients.

#### D. **Weight Given Management Recommendations**

One of the primary factors Advisor considers when determining the desirability of investing in a particular company is the quality and depth of that company’s management. Accordingly, the recommendation of management on any issue is a factor which Advisor considers in determining how proxies should be voted. However, Advisor does not consider recommendations from management to be determinative of Advisor’s ultimate decision. As a matter of practice, the votes with respect to most issues are cast in accordance with the position of the company’s management. Each issue, however, is considered on its own merits, and Advisor will not support the position of a company’s management in any situation where it determines that the ratification of management’s position would adversely affect the investment merits of owning that company’s shares.

#### E. **General Proxy Voting Guidelines**

Advisor has adopted general guidelines for voting proxies as summarized below. Although these guidelines are to be followed as a general policy, in all cases each proxy will be considered based on the relevant facts and circumstances. These guidelines cannot provide an exhaustive list of all the issues that may arise nor can Advisor anticipate all future situations. Corporate governance issues are diverse and continually evolving and Advisor devotes significant time and resources to monitor these changes.

The following guidelines reflect what Advisor believes to be good corporate governance and behavior:

1. **Board of Directors.** The election of directors and an independent board are key to good corporate governance. Directors are expected to be competent individuals and they should be accountable and responsive to shareholders. Advisor supports an independent board of directors, and prefers that key committees such as audit, nominating, and compensation committees be comprised of independent directors. Advisor will generally vote against management efforts to classify a board and will generally support proposals

to declassify the board of directors. While generally in favor of separating Chairman and CEO positions, Advisor will review this issue on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration other factors including the company's corporate governance guidelines and performance.

2. **Ratification of Auditors.** In light of several high profile accounting scandals, Advisor will closely scrutinize the role and performance of auditors. On a case-by-case basis, Advisor will examine proposals relating to non-audit relationships and non-audit fees. Advisor will also consider, on a case-by-case basis, proposals to rotate auditors, and will vote against the ratification of auditors when there is clear and compelling evidence of accounting irregularities or negligence attributable to the auditors.
3. **Management & Director Compensation.** A company's equity-based compensation plan should be in alignment with the shareholders' long-term interests. Advisor evaluates plans on a case-by-case basis by considering several factors to determine whether the plan is fair and reasonable. Advisor will review on a case-by-case basis any shareholder proposals to adopt policies on expensing stock option plans, and will continue to closely monitor any future developments in this area.
4. **Anti-Takeover Mechanisms and Related Issues.** Advisor generally opposes anti-takeover measures since they tend to reduce shareholder rights. However, as with all proxy issues, Advisor conducts an independent review of each anti-takeover proposal.
5. **Changes to Capital Structure.** Advisor realizes that a company's financing decisions have a significant impact on its shareholders, particularly when they involve the issuance of additional shares of common or preferred stock or the assumption of additional debt. Advisor will carefully review, on a case-by-case basis, proposals by companies to increase authorized shares and the purpose for the increase. Advisor will generally not vote in favor of dual-class capital structures to increase the number of authorized shares where that class of stock would have superior voting rights. Advisor will generally vote in favor of the issuance of preferred stock in cases where the company specifies the voting, dividend, conversion and other rights of such stock and the terms of the preferred stock issuance are deemed reasonable. Advisor will review proposals seeking preemptive rights on a case-by-case basis.
6. **Mergers and Corporate Restructuring.** Mergers and acquisitions will be subject to careful review by the research analyst to determine whether they would be beneficial to shareholders. Advisor will analyze various economic and strategic factors in making the final decision on a merger or acquisition. Corporate restructuring proposals are also subject to a thorough examination on a case-by-case basis.
7. **Social and Corporate Policy Issues.** As a fiduciary, Advisor is primarily concerned about the financial interests of its Advisory Clients. Advisor will generally give management discretion with regard to social, environmental and ethical issues although Advisor may vote in favor of those issues that are believed to have significant economic benefits or implications.

#### F. **Proxy Procedures**

The Advisor is fully cognizant of its responsibility to process proxies and maintain proxy records pursuant to SEC rules and regulations. In addition, Company understands its fiduciary duty to vote proxies and that proxy voting decisions may affect the value of shareholdings. Therefore, Company will attempt to process every proxy it receives for all domestic and foreign proxies. However, there may be situations in which



Company cannot vote proxies. For example, if the cost of voting a foreign proxy outweighs the benefit of voting, the Advisor may refrain from processing that vote. Additionally, the Advisor may not be given enough time to process the vote. For example, the Advisor may receive a meeting notice from the company too late, or may be unable to obtain a timely translation of the agenda. In addition, if Company has outstanding sell orders, the proxies for those meetings may not be voted in order to facilitate the sale of those securities. Although Company may hold shares on a company's record date, should it sell them prior to the company's meeting date, Company ultimately may decide not to vote those shares.

The following describes the standard procedures that are to be followed with respect to carrying out Company's proxy policy:

1. The Advisor will identify all Company Clients, maintain a list of those clients, and indicate those Company Clients who have delegated proxy voting authority to the Company. The Advisor will periodically review and update this list.
2. In determining how to vote, the relevant portfolio manager(s) will consider the General Proxy Voting Guidelines set forth above, their in-depth knowledge of the company, and any readily available information and research about the company.
3. The Advisor is responsible for maintaining the documentation that supports Company's voting position. Such documentation will include, but is not limited to, any information provided by proxy service providers, and, especially as to non-routine, materially significant or controversial matters, memoranda describing the position it has taken, why that position is in the best interest of its Company Clients (including separate accounts such as ERISA accounts as well as mutual Fund), an indication of whether it supported or did not support management and any other relevant information. Additionally, the Advisor may include documentation obtained from the research analyst, portfolio manager and/or legal counsel.
4. The Advisor will prepare reports for each client that has requested a record of votes cast. The report will specify the proxy issues that have been voted for the client during the requested period and the position taken with respect to each issue. The Advisor will send one copy to the client, will retain a copy in the client's file and will forward a copy to the appropriate portfolio manager.
5. The Advisor will ensure that all required disclosure about proxy voting of the investment Advisory clients is made in such clients' disclosure documents.
6. Periodically, the Advisor will verify that:
  - All annual proxies for the securities held by Company Clients have been received;
  - Each proxy or a sample of proxies received has been voted in a manner consistent with these Procedures and the Proxy Voting Guidelines;
  - Adequate disclosure has been made to clients and fund shareholders about the procedures and how proxies were voted; and timely filings were made with the SEC related to proxy voting.

**G. Recordkeeping.**

The Advisor is responsible for maintaining appropriate proxy voting records. Such records will include, but are not limited to, a copy of all materials returned to the issuer and/or its agent, the documentation described above, listings of proxies voted by issuer and by client, and any other relevant information.