

**MERK HARD CURRENCY FUND® (the “Fund”)**

**Supplement dated October 17, 2022 to the Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”)  
dated August 1, 2022**

On October 10, 2022, the Board of Trustees (“Board”) of Forum Funds (the “Trust”) approved a Plan of Liquidation and Dissolution (the “Plan”) pursuant to which the assets of the Fund will be liquidated and the proceeds remaining after payment of or provision for liabilities and obligations of the Fund will be distributed to shareholders. The Fund’s investment adviser, Merk Investments LLC (the “Adviser”), has recommended that the Board approve the Plan based on market conditions and economic factors adversely affecting the Fund and the Board concluded that it is in the best interest of the Fund and its shareholders to liquidate the Fund pursuant to the Plan.

In anticipation of the liquidation, the Fund will stop accepting purchases into the Fund as of the date of this supplement. Thereafter, the Fund will begin its process of winding up and liquidating its portfolio assets as soon as reasonably practicable. As a result, the Fund will not be pursuing its investment objective after October 17, 2022. Reinvestment of dividends on existing shares in accounts which have selected that option will continue until the liquidation.

The Fund anticipates that it will complete the liquidation on or around the close of business on or about November 30, 2022 (the “Liquidation Date”). On the Liquidation Date, the Fund will make liquidating distributions to each remaining shareholder, equal to the shareholder’s proportionate interest in the net assets of the Fund, in complete redemption and cancellation of the Fund’s shares held by the shareholder, and thereafter the Fund will be terminated and dissolved.

If you own Fund shares in a tax deferred account, such as an individual retirement account, 401(k) or 403(b) account, you should consult your tax adviser to discuss the Fund’s liquidation and determine its tax consequences.

\* \* \*

For more information, please contact a Fund customer service representative toll free at  
(866) MERK-FUND or (866) 637-5386.

**PLEASE RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.**

## Statement of Additional Information

August 1, 2022

**MERK HARD CURRENCY FUND®**  
INVESTOR SHARES (MERKX)  
INSTITUTIONAL SHARES (MHCIX)

### Investment Adviser

**Merk Investments LLC**  
1150 Chestnut Lane  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

### Account Information and Shareholder Services

**Merk Mutual Funds**  
P.O. Box 588  
Portland, Maine 04112  
(866) MERK FUND (toll free)  
(866) 637-5386 (toll free)  
[www.merkfunds.com](http://www.merkfunds.com)

This Statement of Additional Information (the "SAI") supplements the prospectus dated August 1, 2022, as it may be amended from time to time (the "Prospectus"), offering Investor Shares and Institutional Shares of the Merk Hard Currency Fund (the "Fund"), a separate series of Forum Funds (the "Trust"). This SAI is not a prospectus and should only be read in conjunction with the Prospectus. You may obtain the Prospectus without charge by contacting Atlantic Fund Administration, LLC (d/b/a Apex) ("Apex Fund Services", "Apex" or "Administrator"), a wholly owned subsidiary of Apex US Holdings LLC, at the address, telephone number or e-mail address listed above. You may also obtain the Prospectus on the Adviser's website listed above. This SAI is incorporated by reference into the Fund's Prospectus. In other words, it is legally a part of the Prospectus.

Financial statements for the Fund for the year ended March 31, 2022 are included in the Annual Report to shareholders and are incorporated into this SAI by reference. Copies of the Fund's Annual Report and Semi-Annual Report may be obtained without charge and upon request, by contacting Apex at the address, telephone number or e-mail address listed above. You may also obtain copies of the Fund's most recent Annual Report and Semi-Annual Report on the Adviser's website listed above.

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## KEY DEFINED TERMS

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As used in this SAI, the following terms have the meanings listed.

“1933 Act” means the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, including rules, regulations, SEC interpretations, and any exemptive orders or interpretive relief promulgated thereunder.

“1940 Act” means the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, including rules, regulations, SEC interpretations, and any exemptive orders or interpretive relief promulgated thereunder.

“Adviser” means Merk Investments LLC, the Fund's investment adviser.

“Board” means the Board of Trustees of the Trust.

“Independent Trustees” means trustees who are not interested persons of the Trust, as defined in Section 2(a)(19) of the 1940 Act.

“IRC” means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

“IRS” means the Internal Revenue Service.

“NAV” means net asset value per share.

“RIC” means a domestic corporation qualified as a “regulated investment company” (as defined in Subchapter M of Chapter 1, Subtitle A, of the IRC).

“SEC” means the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

## INVESTMENT POLICIES AND RISKS

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The Merk Hard Currency Fund is a non-diversified series of the Trust. This section supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, the Prospectus. The following are descriptions of the investments and investment practices that the Fund may pursue (in addition to those described in the Prospectus) and the associated risks. Please see the Prospectus for a discussion of the Fund's investment objective, principal investment strategies and principal risks.

### A. Security Ratings Information

The Fund's investments in fixed-income, preferred stock and convertible securities are subject to the credit risk relating to the financial condition of the issuers of the securities. The Fund may invest in investment grade fixed-income securities and up to 5% of its total assets in non-investment grade fixed-income securities. Investment grade means rated in the top four long-term rating categories or unrated and determined by the Adviser to be of comparable quality. Non-investment grade fixed-income securities (commonly known as "junk bonds") are inherently speculative and generally involve greater volatility of price than investment grade securities.

The lowest ratings that are investment grade for corporate bonds, including convertible securities, are "Baa" in the case of Moody's Investors Service, Inc. ("Moody's") and "BBB" in the cases of Standard & Poor's Financial Services, LLC, a division of the McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. ("S&P") and Fitch, Inc. ("Fitch"); for preferred stock the lowest ratings are "Baa" in the case of Moody's and "BBB" in the cases of S&P and Fitch. The Fund may retain securities whose ratings have declined below the lowest permissible rating category (or that are unrated and determined by the Adviser to be of comparable quality to securities whose ratings have declined below the lowest permissible rating category) if the Adviser determines that retaining such security is in the best interests of the Fund. Unrated securities may not be as actively traded as rated securities.

Moody's, S&P, Fitch and other organizations, together known as Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organizations ("NRSROs"), provide ratings of the credit quality of debt obligations, including convertible securities. A description of the range of ratings assigned to various types of bonds and other securities is included in Appendix A to this SAI. The Adviser may use these ratings to determine whether to purchase, sell or hold a security. Ratings are general and are not absolute standards of quality. Credit ratings attempt to evaluate the safety of principal and interest payments and do not evaluate the risks of fluctuations in market value. An issuer's current financial condition may be better or worse than a rating indicates.

### B. Equity Securities

**Equity Securities.** Equity securities in which the Fund may invest include common stocks, preferred stocks, convertible securities and warrants. Common stocks and preferred stocks represent shares of ownership in a corporation. Preferred stocks usually have specific dividends and rank after bonds and before common stock in claims on assets of the corporation should it be dissolved. Increases and decreases in earnings are usually reflected in a corporation's stock price. Convertible securities are debt or preferred equity securities convertible into common stock. Usually, convertible securities pay dividends or interest at rates higher than common stock, but lower than other securities. Convertible securities usually participate to some extent in the appreciation or depreciation of the underlying stock into which they are convertible. Warrants are options to buy a stated number of shares of common stock at a specified price anytime during the life of the warrants.

To the extent the Fund invests in such securities, the value of securities held by the Fund will be affected by changes in the stock markets, which may be the result of domestic or international political or economic news, changes in interest rates or changing investor sentiment. At times, the stock markets can be volatile and stock prices can change substantially. Because some investors purchase equity securities with borrowed money, an increase in interest rates can cause a decline in equity prices. The equity securities of smaller companies are more sensitive to these changes than those of larger companies. This market risk will affect the Fund's NAV per share, which will fluctuate as the value of the securities held by the Fund changes. Not all stock prices change uniformly or at the same time and not all stock markets move in the same direction at the same time. Other factors affect a particular stock's prices, such as poor earnings reports by an issuer, loss of major customers, major litigation against an issuer, or changes in governmental regulations affecting an industry. Adverse news affecting one company can sometimes depress the stock prices of all companies in the same industry. Not all factors can be predicted.

**Convertible Securities.** The Fund may invest in convertible securities. Convertible securities include fixed-income securities, preferred stock or other securities that may be converted into or exchanged for a given amount of common stock of the same or a different issuer during a specified period and at a specified price or formula in the future. Convertible securities generally have features of, and risks associated with, both equity and fixed income instruments. As such, the value of most convertible securities will vary with changes in the price of, and will be subject to the risks associated with, the

underlying common stock. Additionally, convertible securities are also subject to the risk that the issuer may not be able to pay principal or interest when due and the value of the convertible security may change based on the issuer's credit rating.

A convertible security entitles the holder to receive interest on debt or the dividend on preferred stock until the convertible security matures or is redeemed, converted or exchanged. Before conversion, such securities ordinarily provide a stream of income with generally higher yields than common stocks of the same or similar issuers, but lower than the yield on non-convertible debt.

Convertible securities rank senior to common stock in a company's capital structure but are usually subordinated to comparable non-convertible securities. Convertible securities have unique investment characteristics in that they generally: (1) are less subject to fluctuation in value than the underlying common stock since they have fixed-income characteristics; and (2) provide the potential for capital appreciation if the market price of the underlying common stock increases.

A convertible security may be subject to redemption at the option of the issuer at a price established in the convertible security's governing instrument. If a convertible security is called for redemption, the Fund will be required to permit the issuer to redeem the security, convert it into the underlying common stock or sell it to a third party. The price of a convertible security may reflect variations in the price of the underlying common stock in a way that nonconvertible debt does not. Convertible securities may be issued by smaller capitalization companies whose stock prices may be more volatile than larger capitalization companies. Such risk is reduced, however, to the extent that the convertible security sells above its value as a fixed-income security.

**Warrants.** Warrants are securities, typically issued with preferred stock or bonds that give the holder the right to purchase a given number of shares of common stock at a specified price and time. The price usually represents a premium over the applicable market value of the common stock at the time of the warrant's issuance. Warrants have no voting rights with respect to the common stock, receive no dividends and have no rights with respect to the assets of the issuer.

Investments in warrants involve certain risks, including the possible lack of a liquid market for the resale of the warrants, potential price fluctuations due to adverse market conditions or other factors and failure of the price of the common stock to rise. If the warrant is not exercised within the specified time period, it becomes worthless.

**Depository Receipts.** The Fund may invest in sponsored and unsponsored American Depositary Receipts ("ADRs"), European Depositary Receipts ("EDRs"), Global Depositary Receipts ("GDRs"), New York Registered Shares ("NYRs") or American Depositary Shares ("ADSs"). Unsponsored depository receipts may be created without the participation of the foreign issuer. Holders of these receipts generally bear all the costs of the depository receipt facility, whereas foreign issuers typically bear certain costs in a sponsored depository receipt. The bank or trust company depository of an unsponsored depository receipt may be under no obligation to distribute shareholder communications received from the foreign issuer or to pass through voting rights. Accordingly, available information concerning the issuer may not be current, and the prices of unsponsored depository receipts may be more volatile than the prices of sponsored depository receipts. The securities underlying ADRs trade on foreign exchanges at times when the U.S. markets are not open for trading. As a result, the value of ADRs representing those underlying securities may change materially at times when the U.S. markets are not open for trading.

ADRs typically are issued by a United States of America ("U.S.") bank or trust company, evidence ownership of underlying securities issued by a foreign company, and are designed for use in the U.S. securities markets. EDRs are issued by European financial institutions and typically trade in Europe and GDRs are issued by European financial institutions and typically trade in both Europe and the U.S. NYRs, also known as Guilder Shares since most of the issuing companies are Dutch, are dollar-denominated certificates issued by foreign companies specifically for the U.S. market. ADSs are shares issued under a deposit agreement that represents an underlying security in the issuer's home country. (An ADS is the actual share trading, while an ADR represents a bundle of ADSs.) The Fund may invest in sponsored, exchange-traded depository receipts in order to obtain exposure to foreign securities markets.

### **C. Fixed-Income Securities**

**Money Market Instruments and Other Securities.** The Fund may invest in U.S. dollar and non-U.S. dollar denominated money market instruments and similar securities, including debt obligations issued by the U.S. and foreign national, provincial, state or municipal governments or their political subdivisions or agencies. The Fund may also invest in (1) money market instruments and similar securities issued by supranational international organizations or special purpose entities ("Special Purpose Entities") designated or supported by governmental entities (*e.g.*, the World Bank and the European Community); (2) non-dollar securities issued by the U.S. government; and (3) foreign corporations. Money

market instruments in which the Fund may invest include short-term government securities, floating and variable rate notes, commercial paper, repurchase agreements, CDs, time deposits, bankers' acceptances, and other short-term liquid instruments.

**U.S. Government Securities.** The Fund considers U.S. Government Securities to include: (1) U.S. Treasury obligations (which differ only in their interest rates and maturities), (2) obligations issued or guaranteed by U.S. Government agencies and instrumentalities that are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government (such as securities issued by the Federal Housing Administration ("FHA"), Government National Mortgage Association ("GNMA"), the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Export-Import Bank, the General Services Administration and the Maritime Administration and certain securities issued by the FHA and the Small Business Administration) and (3) securities that are guaranteed by agencies or instrumentalities of the U.S. Government but are not backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government (such as the Federal National Mortgage Association ("Fannie Mae"), the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation ("Freddie Mac") or the Federal Home Loan Banks). These U.S. Government-sponsored entities, which although chartered and sponsored by Congress, are not guaranteed nor insured by the U.S. Government. They are supported by the credit of the issuing agency, instrumentality or corporation. The range of maturities of U.S. Government Securities is usually three months to thirty years. In general, the U.S. Government Securities tend to carry more interest rate risk than corporate bonds with similar maturities.

In September 2008, the U.S. Treasury and the Federal Housing Finance Agency ("FHFA") announced that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac had been placed in conservatorship. Since that time, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have received significant capital support through U.S. Treasury preferred stock purchases, as well as Treasury and Federal Reserve purchases of their mortgage-backed securities ("MBS"). The FHFA and the U.S. Treasury (through its agreement to purchase Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae preferred stock) have imposed strict limits on the size of their mortgage portfolios. While the MBS purchase programs ended in 2010, the U.S. Treasury continued its support for the entities' capital as necessary to prevent a negative net worth through at least 2012. When a credit rating agency downgraded long-term U.S. Government debt in August 2011, the agency also downgraded Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's bond ratings, from AAA to AA+, based on their direct reliance on the U.S. Government (although that rating did not directly relate to their MBS). From the end of 2007 through the fourth quarter of 2017, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac required U.S. Treasury support of approximately \$187.5 billion through draws under the preferred stock purchase agreements. However, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have paid approximately \$278.8 billion in aggregate cash dividends to the U.S. Treasury over the same period (although those payments do not constitute a repayment under their draws). In the first quarter of 2018, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac each reported that the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in December 2017 had resulted in a decrease in the value of their deferred tax assets. As a result, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac each reported net losses during the fourth quarter of 2017 and indicated that they would request draws from the U.S. Treasury in the amount of \$3.7 billion and \$0.3 billion, respectively. No assurance can be given that any Federal Reserve, U.S. Treasury, or FHFA initiatives will ensure that Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae will remain successful in meeting their obligations with respect to the debt and MBS they issue.

In addition, the problems faced by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, resulting in their being placed into federal conservatorship and receiving significant U.S. Government support, have sparked serious debate among federal policy makers regarding the continued role of the U.S. Government in providing liquidity for mortgage loans. In December 2011, Congress enacted the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act of 2011 which, among other provisions, requires that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac increase their single-family guaranty fees by at least 10 basis points and remit this increase to the U.S. Treasury with respect to all loans acquired by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac on or after April 1, 2012 and before January 1, 2022. Serious discussions among policymakers continue, however, as to whether Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac should be nationalized, privatized, restructured or eliminated altogether. Fannie Mae reported in the second quarter of 2014 that there was "significant uncertainty regarding the future of our company, including how long the company will continue to exist in its current form, the extent of our role in the market, what form we will have, and what ownership interest, if any, our current common and preferred stockholders will hold in us after the conservatorship is terminated and whether we will continue to exist following conservatorship." Freddie Mac faces similar uncertainty about its future role. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac also are the subject of several continuing legal actions and investigations over certain accounting, disclosure or corporate governance matters, which (along with any resulting financial restatements) may continue to have an adverse effect on the guaranteeing entities.

The Fund may also invest in separated or divided U.S. Government Securities, including "stripped" securities such as interest only ("IO") and principal only ("PO") securities. These instruments represent a single interest, or principal, payment on a U.S. Government Security that has been separated from all the other interest payments as well as the security itself. While the components of such instruments are drawn from U.S. Government Securities, separated or divided securities may be formed by non-governmental institutions. When a Fund purchases such an instrument, it purchases the right to receive

a single payment of a set sum at a known date in the future. The interest rate on such an instrument is determined by the price a Fund pays for the instrument when it purchases the instrument at a discount under what the instrument entitles the Fund to receive when the instrument matures. The amount of the discount a Fund will receive will depend upon the length of time to maturity of the separated U.S. Government Security and prevailing market interest rates when the separated U.S. Government Security is purchased. Separated U.S. Government Securities can be considered zero coupon investments because no payment is made to a Fund until maturity. The market values of these securities are much more susceptible to change in market interest rates than income-producing securities. These securities are purchased with original issue discount and such discount is includable as gross income to a Fund shareholder over the life of the security.

The Fund may also purchase certificates not issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which evidence ownership of future interest, principal or interest and principal payments on obligations issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The actual U.S. Treasury securities will be held by a custodian on behalf of the certificate holder. These certificates are purchased with original issue discount and are subject to greater fluctuations in market value, based upon changes in market interest rates, than income-producing securities.

**Mortgage-Backed Securities.** The Fund may invest in mortgage-backed securities, including collateralized mortgage obligations and mortgage pass-through securities. These securities represent interests in pools of mortgage loans. The payments of principal and interest on the underlying loans pass through to investors. Although the underlying mortgage loans are for specified periods of time, such as fifteen to thirty years, the borrowers can, and typically do, repay them sooner. Thus, the security holders may receive prepayments of principal, in addition to the principal and interest due, which is part of the regular monthly payments.

The value of mortgage-backed securities may be significantly affected by changes in interest rates, the markets' perception of issuers, the structure of the securities and the creditworthiness of the parties involved. There are three primary types of interest rate related risks associated with mortgage-backed securities. The first is interest rate risk. The values of mortgage-backed securities will generally fluctuate inversely with interest rates. The second is prepayment risk. This is the risk that borrowers will repay their mortgages earlier than anticipated. Prepayments of principal of mortgage-backed securities by mortgagors or mortgage foreclosures affect the average life of the mortgage-backed securities. The occurrence of mortgage prepayments is affected by various factors, including the level of interest rates, general economic conditions, the location and age of the mortgages and other social and demographic conditions. In periods of rising interest rates, the prepayment rate tends to decrease, lengthening the average life of a pool of mortgage-backed securities. In periods of falling interest rates, the prepayment rate tends to increase, shortening the average life of a pool. The volume of prepayments of principal on the mortgages underlying a particular mortgage-backed security will influence the yield of that security, affecting a Fund's yield. Because prepayments of principal generally occur when interest rates are declining, it is likely that a Fund, to the extent it retains the same percentage of fixed-income securities, may have to reinvest the proceeds of prepayments at lower interest rates than those of their previous investments. If this occurs, a Fund's yield will correspondingly decline. Thus, mortgage-backed securities may have less potential for capital appreciation in periods of falling interest rates (when prepayment of principal is more likely) than other fixed-income securities of comparable duration, although they may have a comparable risk of decline in market value in periods of rising interest rates. A decrease in the rate of prepayments may extend the effective maturities of mortgage-backed securities, reducing their sensitivity to changes in market interest rates. To the extent that a Fund purchases mortgage-backed securities at a premium, unscheduled prepayments, which are made at par, result in a loss equal to an unamortized premium. The third is extension risk. When interest rates rise, prepayments often drop, which should extend the average maturity of the mortgage-backed security. This makes mortgage-backed securities more sensitive to interest rate changes. The ability of a Fund to successfully utilize mortgage-backed securities depends in part upon the ability of the Adviser to forecast interest rates and other economic factors correctly.

Mortgage-backed securities may also be subject to credit risk. Payment of principal and interest on most mortgage pass-through securities (but not the market value of the securities themselves) may be guaranteed by U.S. Government agencies whose obligations are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government (in the case of securities guaranteed by GNMA) or may be guaranteed by agencies or instrumentalities of the U.S. Government whose obligations are not backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government (such as Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac). See "U.S. Government Securities".

To lessen the effect of the failures by obligors on mortgage assets to make payments, CMOs and other mortgage-backed securities may contain elements of credit enhancement, consisting of either (1) liquidity protection or (2) protection against losses resulting after default by an obligor on the underlying assets and allocation of all amounts recoverable directly from the obligor and through liquidation of the collateral. This protection may be provided through guarantees, insurance policies or letters of credit obtained by the issuer or sponsor from third parties, through various means of structuring the transaction or through a combination of these.

**Corporate Debt Obligations.** The Fund may invest in U.S. and foreign corporate debt obligations. Corporate debt obligations include corporate bonds, debentures, notes, commercial paper and other similar corporate debt instruments. Companies use these instruments to borrow money from investors. The issuer pays the investor a fixed or variable rate of interest and must repay the amount borrowed at maturity. Commercial paper (short-term unsecured promissory notes) is issued by companies to finance their current obligations and normally has a maturity of less than nine (9) months. In addition, the Fund also may invest in corporate debt securities registered and sold in the U.S. by foreign issuers (sometimes called Yankee bonds) and those sold outside the U.S. by foreign or U.S. issuers (sometimes called Eurobonds).

**Junk Bonds.** The Fund may invest in lower-rated debt securities, often called junk bonds. Junk bonds are those rated below BBB by S&P and Fitch or Baa by Moody's. Securities rated BBB by S&P and Fitch are considered investment grade, but Moody's considers securities rated Baa to have speculative characteristics. Junk bonds generally offer a higher current yield than that available for higher-grade debt obligations. However, lower-rated debt obligations 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. The Fund may invest in investment grade fixed-income securities and up to 5% of its total assets in non-investment grade fixed-income securities.

**Variable Amount Master Demand Notes.** Variable amount master demand notes are unsecured demand notes that permit investment of fluctuating amounts of money at variable rates of interest pursuant to arrangements with issuers who meet certain quality criteria. All variable amount master demand notes acquired by a Fund will be payable within a prescribed notice period not to exceed seven days.

**Variable and Floating Rate Securities.** Fixed-income securities that have variable or floating rates of interest may, under certain limited circumstances, have varying principal amounts. These securities pay interest at rates that are adjusted periodically according to a specified formula, usually with reference to one or more interest rate indices or market interest rates called the underlying index. The interest paid on these securities is a function primarily of the underlying index upon which the interest rate adjustments are based. These adjustments minimize changes in the market value of the obligation. Similar to fixed rate debt instruments, variable and floating rate instruments are subject to changes in value based on changes in market interest rates or changes in the issuer's creditworthiness. The rate of interest on securities may be tied to U.S. Government Securities or indices on those securities as well as any other rate of interest or index.

Variable and floating rate demand notes of corporations are redeemable upon a specified period of notice. These obligations include master demand notes that permit investment of fluctuating amounts at varying interest rates under direct arrangements with the issuer of the instrument. The issuer of these obligations often has the right, after a given period, to prepay the outstanding principal amount of the obligations upon a specified number of days' notice. Certain securities may have an initial principal amount that varies over time based on an interest rate index, and, accordingly, a Fund might be entitled to less than the initial principal amount of the security upon the security's maturity. A Fund intends to purchase these securities only when the Adviser believes the interest income from the instrument justifies any principal risks associated with the instrument. The Adviser may attempt to limit any potential loss of principal by purchasing similar instruments that are intended to provide an offsetting increase in principal. There can be no assurance that the Adviser will be able to limit the effects of principal fluctuations and, accordingly, a Fund may incur losses on those securities even if held to maturity without issuer default.

There may not be an active secondary market for any particular floating or variable rate instruments, which could make it difficult for a Fund to dispose of the instrument during periods that the Fund is not entitled to exercise any demand rights they may have. A Fund could, for this or other reasons, suffer a loss with respect to those instruments. The Adviser monitors the liquidity of the Fund's investment in variable and floating rate instruments, but there can be no guarantee that an active secondary market will exist.

**Financial Institution Obligations.** Obligations of financial institutions include, among other things, negotiable certificates of deposit and bankers' acceptances, time deposits and other short-term debt obligations. Certificates of deposit represent an institution's obligation to repay funds deposited with it that earn a specified interest rate over a given period. Bankers' acceptances are negotiable obligations of a bank to pay a draft which has been drawn by a customer and are usually backed by goods in international trade. Time deposits are nonnegotiable deposits with a banking institution that earn a specified interest rate over a given period. Certificates of deposit and fixed time deposits, which are payable on the stated maturity date and bear a fixed rate of interest, generally may be withdrawn on demand by a Fund but may be subject to early withdrawal penalties that could reduce the Fund's performance. Although fixed time deposits do not in all cases have a secondary market, there are no contractual restrictions on a Fund's right to transfer a beneficial interest in the deposits to third parties.

**Risks of Fixed-Income Securities.** Yields on fixed-income securities, including municipal securities, are dependent on a variety of factors, including the general conditions of the fixed-income securities markets, the size of a particular offering, the maturity of the obligation and the rating of the issue. Under normal conditions, fixed-income securities with longer maturities tend to offer higher yields and are generally subject to greater price movements than obligations with shorter maturities.

The issuers of debt securities are subject to the provisions of bankruptcy, insolvency and other laws affecting the rights and remedies of creditors that may restrict the ability of the issuer to pay, when due, the principal of and interest on its debt securities. The possibility exists therefore that, as a result of bankruptcy, litigation or other conditions, the ability of an issuer to pay, when due, the principal of and interest on its debt securities may become impaired.

**Interest Rates.** The market value of the interest-bearing fixed-income securities held by a Fund will be affected by changes in interest rates. There is normally an inverse relationship between the market value of securities sensitive to prevailing interest rates and actual changes in interest rates. The longer the remaining maturity and duration of a security, the more sensitive the security is to changes in interest rates. All fixed-income securities, including U.S. Government Securities, can change in value when there is a change in interest rates. Changes in the ability of an issuer to make payments of interest and principal and in the markets' perception of an issuer's creditworthiness will also affect the market value of that issuer's debt securities. As a result, an investment in a Fund is subject to risk, even if all fixed-income securities in the Fund's investment portfolio are paid in full at maturity. In addition, certain fixed-income securities may be subject to extension risk, which refers to the change in total return on a security resulting from an extension or abbreviation of the security's maturity.

To try to reduce interest rate and credit risk to its portfolio, a Fund may invest in money market or other short-term debt instruments that are rated in the top three ratings by an NRSRO or that the Adviser considers comparable in quality to instruments rated in the top three ratings. In determining which instruments are comparable in quality to instruments rated in the top three ratings, the Adviser will evaluate the relative creditworthiness of issuers and the relative credit quality of debt issues. Consideration may be given an issuer's financial strength, capacity for timely payment and ability to withstand adverse financial developments as well as any ratings assigned to other instruments issued by that issuer. In addition to the foregoing, the Fund typically maintains a weighted average portfolio maturity of less than eighteen months. Positions in common stock, to the extent maintained by the Fund, are disregarded for the purposes of calculating weighted average maturity.

**Credit.** A Fund's investments in fixed-income securities are subject to credit risk relating to the financial condition of the issuers of the securities that the Fund holds. The Fund may invest in high yield securities that provide poor protection for payment of principal and interest but may have greater potential for capital appreciation than do higher quality securities. These securities also have greater risk of default or price changes due to changes in the issuers' creditworthiness than do higher quality securities. The market for these securities may be thinner and less active than that for higher quality securities, which may affect the price at which the lower rated securities can be sold. In addition, the market prices of these securities may fluctuate more than the market prices of higher quality securities and may decline significantly in periods of general economic difficulty or rising interest rates. Under such conditions, a Fund may have to use subjective rather than objective criteria to value its high yield/high risk securities investments accurately and may rely more heavily on the judgment of the Adviser to do so.

Moody's, S&P and other organizations provide ratings of the credit quality of debt obligations, including convertible securities. See "Securities Ratings Information" above.

**Sovereign and Non-U.S. Dollar Denominated Debt Securities.** The Fund may invest 80% or more of their assets in foreign government securities. Foreign government securities include securities issued or guaranteed by foreign governments (including political subdivisions) or their authorities, agencies, or instrumentalities or by supra-national agencies. Certain foreign securities may be non-U.S. dollar-denominated securities, including debt obligations denominated in foreign or composite securities. Supra-national agencies are agencies whose member nations make capital contributions to support the agencies' activities. Examples include the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank), the Asian Development Bank, the European Coal and Steel Community, and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Different kinds of foreign government securities have different kinds of government support. Foreign government securities of some countries may involve varying degrees of credit risk as a result of financial or political instability in those countries or the possible inability of the Fund to enforce its rights against the foreign government. As with issuers of other fixed income securities, sovereign issuers may be unable or unwilling to make timely principal or interest payments. Securities based on the same currency may be affected similarly by political, economic and business developments, changes and conditions relevant in the markets.

For purposes of the Fund's concentration policies, the Fund treats each foreign government or sovereign as its own industry.

The Fund may also invest in debt obligations issued by entities that the Adviser considers to be comparable to entities in the categories enumerated above or foreign corporations.

#### **D. Foreign Investments**

Investments in the securities of foreign issuers may involve risks in addition to those normally associated with investments in the securities of U.S. issuers. All foreign investments are subject to risks of: (1) foreign political and economic instability; (2) adverse movements in foreign exchange rates; (3) the imposition or tightening of exchange controls or other limitations on repatriation of foreign capital; and (4) changes in foreign governmental attitudes toward private investment, including potential nationalization, increased taxation or confiscation of a Fund's assets.

In addition, dividends payable on foreign securities may be subject to foreign withholding taxes, thereby reducing the income available for distribution to you. Foreign brokerage commissions and custody fees are generally higher than those in the United States. Foreign accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards differ from those in the United States and therefore, less information may be available about foreign companies than is available about comparable U.S. companies. Foreign securities also may trade less frequently and with lower volume and may exhibit greater price volatility than U.S. securities.

Changes in foreign exchange rates will affect the U.S. dollar value of all foreign currency-denominated securities held by a Fund. Exchange rates are influenced generally by the forces of supply and demand in the foreign currency markets and by numerous other political and economic events occurring outside the United States, many of which may be difficult, if not impossible, to predict.

Income from foreign securities will be received and realized in foreign currencies and a Fund is required to compute and distribute income in U.S. dollars. Accordingly, a decline in the value of a particular foreign currency against the U.S. dollar after the Fund's income has been earned and computed in U.S. dollars may require the Fund to liquidate portfolio securities to acquire sufficient U.S. dollars to make a distribution. Similarly, if the exchange rate declines between the time a Fund incurs expenses in U.S. dollars and the time such expenses are paid, the Fund may be required to liquidate additional foreign securities to purchase the U.S. dollars required to meet such expenses.

The value of a Fund's investments may be affected by inflation, trade deficits, changes in interest rates, budget deficits and low savings rates, political factors and other factors. Trade deficits often cause inflation making a country's goods more expensive and less competitive thereby reducing the demand for that country's currency. High interest rates tend to increase currency values in the short-term by making such currencies attractive to investors; however, long-term results may be the opposite as high interest rates are often the product of high inflation. Political instability in a country can also cause a currency to depreciate if it appears that the country is inhospitable to business and foreign investment. In addition, various central banks may manipulate the exchange rate movements through their own buying and selling and can influence people's expectation with regard to the direction of exchange rates.

**Asian and Emerging Markets.** The Fund may invest in securities or instruments that provide exposure to Asian and Emerging Markets. The value of a Fund's assets may be adversely affected by political, economic, social and religious instability; changes in laws or regulations of countries within Asia; international relations with other nations; and military activity. Furthermore, the economies of many Asian countries may differ from the economies of more developed countries in many respects, such as rate of growth, inflation, capital reinvestment, resource self-sufficiency, financial system stability, the national balance of payment position, and sensitivity to changes in global trade. The governments of certain countries have placed restrictions on the operational freedom of private enterprise, and have or may nationalize private assets, including securities held by a Fund. Asian countries also have different accounting standards, corporate disclosure, governance and regulatory requirements than does the United States. As a result, there may be less publicly available information about securities in Asian countries. There is generally less governmental regulation of stock exchanges, brokers and issuers than in the United States, which may result in less transparency with respect to Asian securities. A Fund may have difficulty obtaining or enforcing judgments against issuers of Asian securities. Any adverse event in the Asian markets may have a significant adverse effect on the economies of the region as well as a Fund.

Many Asian countries are considered emerging markets. Investing in emerging markets involve greater risks than investing in more developed markets because, among other things, emerging markets are often less stable politically and economically. The economies of emerging market countries are smaller and less developed than that of the United States. Securities markets of such countries are substantially smaller, less liquid, and more volatile than securities markets in the

United States. Brokerage commissions, custodian services fees, withholding taxes, and other costs relating to investment in emerging markets are generally higher than in the United States.

**Custody Risk.** Custody risk refers to the risks in the process of clearing and settling trades and to the holding of securities by local banks, agents and depositories. Acquiring, holding and transferring interests in securities by book-entry through any security intermediary is subject to the laws and contractual provisions governing the relationship with the intermediary, as well as the laws and contractual provisions governing the relationship with the intermediary, as well as the laws and contractual provisions governing the relationship between such intermediary and each other intermediary, if any, standing between themselves and the individual security.

Low trading volumes and volatile prices in less developed markets make trades harder to complete and settle. Local agents are held only to the standards of care in the local markets. Governments or trade groups may compel local agents to hold securities in designated depositories that are not subject to independent evaluation. The less developed a country's securities market is, the greater the likelihood of custody problems.

**Brexit.** The United Kingdom officially withdrew from the European Union ("EU") on January 31, 2020 in an act commonly referred to as "Brexit." The effect of Brexit on the United Kingdom and European economies will likely depend on the nature of trade relations between the United Kingdom and the EU and other major economies following Brexit, which are matters being negotiated. The period following the UK's withdrawal from the EU is expected to be one of significant political and economic uncertainty particularly until the UK government and EU member states agree and implement the terms of the UK's future relationship with the EU. Brexit may create additional economic stresses for the UK, which may include causing a contraction of the UK economy and price volatility in UK stocks, decreased trade, capital outflows, devaluation of pounds sterling, and wider corporate bond spreads due to uncertainty and declines in business and consumer spending as well as foreign direct investment. The Fund may be negatively impacted by changes in law and tax treatment resulting from or following Brexit. Until the economic effects of Brexit become clearer, and while a period of political, regulatory and commercial uncertainty continues, there remains a risk that Brexit may negatively impact the value of investments held by the Fund. In addition, if one or more other countries were to exit the EU or abandon the use of the euro as a currency, the value of investments tied to those countries or the euro could decline significantly and unpredictably.

## **E. Foreign Transactions**

The Fund may temporarily hold funds in bank deposits in foreign currencies during the completion of investment programs. The Fund may conduct foreign currency exchange transactions either on a spot (cash) basis at the spot rate prevailing in the foreign exchange market or by entering into a forward foreign currency contract. Such a forward contract involves an obligation to purchase or sell a specific amount of a specific currency at a future date, which may be any fixed number of days (usually less than one year) from the date of the contract agreed upon by the parties, at a price set at the time of the contract. Forward contracts are considered "derivatives" -- financial instruments whose performance is derived, at least in part, from the performance of another asset (such as a security, currency or an index of securities). A Fund enters into forward contracts in order to "lock in" the exchange rate between the currency it will deliver and the currency it will receive for the duration of the contract. In addition, a Fund may enter into forward contracts to hedge against risks arising from securities the Fund owns or anticipates purchasing, or the U.S. dollar value of interest and dividends paid on those securities. A Fund may collateralize forward contracts with U.S. dollar and non-U.S. dollar denominated securities. To reduce risk to a Fund, the Adviser monitors the creditworthiness of counterparties to the Fund's transactions and the amount of investments with any single counterparty so that Adviser does not rely too heavily upon one counterparty.

At or before settlement of a forward currency contract, a Fund may either deliver the currency or terminate its contractual obligation to deliver the currency by purchasing an offsetting contract. If a Fund makes delivery of the foreign currency at or before the settlement of a forward contract, it may be required to obtain the currency through the conversion of assets of the Fund into the currency. A Fund may close out a forward contract obligating it to purchase currency by selling an offsetting contract, in which case, it will realize a gain or a loss.

The Fund may invest in a combination of forward currency contracts and U.S. dollar-denominated instruments in an attempt to obtain an investment result that is substantially the same as a direct investment in a foreign currency-denominated instrument. This investment technique creates a "synthetic" position in the particular foreign-currency instrument whose performance the manager is trying to duplicate. For example, the combination of U.S. dollar-denominated money market instruments with "long" forward currency exchange contracts creates a position economically equivalent to a money market instrument denominated in the foreign currency itself. Such combined positions are sometimes necessary when the money market in a particular foreign currency is small or relatively illiquid.

For the purpose of hedging, efficient portfolio management, generating income and/or enhancement of returns, the Fund may also, from time to time, enter into derivative currency transactions, such as forward contracts including currency forwards, cross currency forwards (each of which may result in net short currency exposures), financial and index futures contracts (including currency and currency index futures contracts) or options on currencies or such futures contracts. Such transactions could be effected with respect to hedges on non-U.S. dollar denominated securities owned by a Fund, sold by a Fund but not yet delivered, or committed or anticipated to be purchased by a Fund. The successful use of these transactions will usually depend on the Adviser's ability to forecast accurately currency exchange rate movements. Should exchange rates move in an unexpected manner, a Fund may not achieve the anticipated benefits of the transaction, or it may realize losses. In addition, these techniques could result in a loss if the counterparty to the transaction does not perform as promised. Moreover, investors should bear in mind that a Fund is not obligated to actively engage in these transactions; for example, a Fund may not have attempted to hedge its exposure to a particular foreign currency at a time when doing so might have avoided a loss.

When the Fund uses forward currency contracts to hedge, the Fund may hedge either specific transactions (transaction hedging) or portfolio positions (position hedging). Transaction hedging is the purchase or sale of forward currency contracts with respect to specific receivables or payables of a Fund in connection with the purchase and sale of portfolio securities. Position hedging is the sale of a forward currency contract on a particular currency with respect to portfolio positions denominated or quoted in that currency.

The Fund may use forward currency contracts for position hedging if consistent with its policy of trying to expose its net assets to foreign currencies. The Fund is not required to enter into forward currency contracts for hedging purposes and it is possible that a Fund may not be able to hedge against a currency devaluation that is so generally anticipated that a Fund is unable to contract to sell the currency at a price above the devaluation level it anticipates. It also is possible, under certain circumstances, that a Fund may have to limit its currency transactions to qualify as a "regulated investment company" under the Code. For additional information on the Fund's limitations with respect to currency futures and forwards see "Derivatives" below.

At or before the maturity of a forward currency contract, a Fund may either sell a portfolio security and make delivery of the currency, or retain the security and terminate its contractual obligation to deliver the currency by buying an "offsetting" contract obligating it to buy, on the same maturity date, the same amount of the currency. If a Fund engages in an offsetting transaction, it may later enter into a new forward currency contract to sell the currency.

If a Fund engages in an offsetting transaction, it will incur a gain or loss to the extent that there has been movement in forward currency contract prices. If forward prices go down during the period between the date a Fund enters into a forward currency contract for the sale of a currency and the date it enters into an offsetting contract for the purchase of the currency, the Fund will realize a gain to the extent that the price of the currency it has agreed to sell exceeds the price of the currency it has agreed to buy. If forward prices go up, the Fund will suffer a loss to the extent the price of the currency it has agreed to buy exceeds the price of the currency it has agreed to sell.

Since a Fund invests in money market instruments denominated in foreign currencies, each may hold foreign currencies pending investment or conversion into U.S. dollars. Although a Fund values its assets daily in U.S. dollars, it does not convert its holdings of foreign currencies into U.S. dollars on a daily basis. A Fund will convert its holdings from time to time, however, and incur the costs of currency conversion. Foreign exchange dealers do not charge a fee for conversion, but they do realize a profit based on the difference between the prices at which they buy and sell various currencies. Thus, a dealer may offer to sell a foreign currency to a Fund at one rate, and offer to buy the currency at a lower rate if the Fund tries to resell the currency to the dealer.

**Foreign Currency Transaction Risk.** Foreign currency transactions involve certain costs and risks. A Fund incurs foreign exchange expenses in converting assets from one currency to another. Forward contracts involve a risk of loss if the Adviser is inaccurate in its prediction of currency movements. The projection of short-term currency market movements is extremely difficult and the successful execution of a short-term hedging strategy is highly uncertain. The precise matching of forward contract amounts and the value of the securities involved is generally not possible. Accordingly, it may be necessary for a Fund to purchase additional foreign currency if the market value of the security is less than the amount of the foreign currency the Fund is obligated to deliver under the forward contract and the decision is made to sell the security and make delivery of the foreign currency. The use of forward contracts as a hedging technique does not eliminate fluctuations in the prices of the underlying securities a Fund owns or intends to acquire, but it does fix a rate of exchange in advance. Although forward contracts can reduce the risk of loss due to a decline in the value of the hedged currencies, they also limit any potential gain that might result from an increase in the value of the currencies. There is also the risk that the other party to the transaction may fail to deliver currency when due which may result in a loss to a Fund.

**Currency Fluctuations.** The value of a Fund's investments is calculated in U.S. dollars each day that the NYSE is open for business. As a result, to the extent that a Fund's assets are invested in instruments denominated in foreign currencies and the currencies appreciate relative to the U.S. dollar, the Fund's NAV per share as expressed in U.S. dollars (and, therefore, the value of your investment) should increase. If the U.S. dollar appreciates relative to the other currencies, the opposite should occur.

The currency-related gains and losses experienced by a Fund will be based on changes in the value of portfolio securities attributable to currency fluctuations only in relation to the original purchase price of such securities as stated in U.S. dollars. Gains or losses on shares of a Fund will be based on changes attributable to fluctuations in the NAV of such shares, expressed in U.S. dollars, in relation to the original U.S. dollar purchase price of the shares. The amount of appreciation or depreciation in the Fund's assets also will be affected by the net investment income generated by the money market instruments in which the Fund invests and by changes in the value of the securities that are unrelated to changes in currency exchange rates.

## **F. Derivatives**

**Derivatives.** Derivatives are financial instruments that have a value which depends upon, or is derived from, the value of something else, such as one or more underlying securities, pools of securities, options, futures, indexes or currencies. Gains or losses involving derivative instruments may be substantial, because a relatively small price movement in the underlying securities, instrument, currency or index may result in a substantial gain or loss for the Fund.

Historically, an adviser of a fund trading commodity interests (such as futures contracts, options on futures contracts, nondeliverable forwards, swaps and cash-settled foreign currency contracts) has been excluded from regulation as a commodity pool operator ("CPO") pursuant to CFTC Regulation 4.5. In 2012, the CFTC amended Regulation 4.5 to dramatically narrow this exclusion.

Under the amended Regulation 4.5 exclusion, a fund's commodity interests - other than those used for bona fide hedging purposes (as defined by the CFTC) - must be limited such that the aggregate initial margin and premiums required to establish the positions (after taking into account unrealized profits and unrealized losses on any such positions and excluding the amount by which options are "in-the-money" at the time of purchase) does not exceed 5% of the liquidation value of the fund's portfolio, or alternatively, the aggregate net notional value of the positions, determined at the time the most recent position was established, does not exceed 100% of the liquidation value of the fund's portfolio (after taking into account unrealized profits and unrealized losses on any such positions). Further, to qualify for the exclusion in amended Regulation 4.5, a fund must satisfy a marketing test, which requires, among other things, that the fund not hold itself out as a vehicle for trading commodity interests.

The Adviser intends to comply with one of the two alternative limitations described above with respect to the Fund and claim an exclusion from the definition of the term "commodity pool operator" under the Commodity Exchange Act ("CEA") with respect to the Fund. Complying with the limitations may restrict the Adviser's ability to use derivatives as part of the Fund's investment strategies. Although the Adviser expects to be able to execute the Fund's strategies within the limitations, performance could be adversely affected.

Options are derivatives. Derivatives are financial instruments that have a value which depends upon, or is derived from, the value of something else ("Reference Asset"), such as securities, commodities or indexes. All derivatives can create leverage. Accordingly, relatively small price movements in a Reference Asset may result in a substantial loss or gain for the Fund.

The Fund may purchase or write (sell) put and call options. A call option is a contract under which the purchaser of the call option, in return for paying a premium, has the right to buy the Reference Asset from the writer of the call option at a specified price (the "exercise price"). The writer of the call option, who received the premium, has the obligation to deliver the Reference Asset or the cash equivalent to the option purchaser upon exercise of the option. The "cash equivalent" is the difference between the exercise price and the (higher) market price.

A put option is a contract under which the purchaser of the put option, in return for paying a premium, obtains the right to sell a Reference Asset to the writer of the put option at the exercise price. The writer of the put option, who received the premium, has the obligation to buy the Reference Asset from the purchaser of the put option or deliver the cash equivalent upon exercise of the option. The "cash equivalent" is the difference between the exercise price and the (lower) market price.

Options have expiration dates – meaning, they expire after a certain period. After the expiration date of an option, the option purchaser no longer has a right to exercise the option. Options normally have expiration dates of between three and nine months from the date written. “American style” options are exercisable at any time prior to the expiration date. “European style” options are exercisable only immediately prior to the expiration date. Writers of American style options have no control over when they may be required to fulfill their obligations under the options contract and thus are exposed to a timing risk.

Options may be traded on a U.S. or non-U.S. exchange or over-the-counter (“OTC”). Exchange-traded options are issued by a clearing organization, and the clearing organization essentially guarantees completion of every exchange-traded options transaction. In contrast, OTC options are contracts between two parties, such as the Fund and a counterparty. The Fund is subject to “Counterparty Risk,” as described below, in connection with OTC options transactions: no party guarantees completion of such transactions; and there is no assurance that the Fund will be able to liquidate any OTC options position at any time prior to expiration. There is no assurance that a liquid market will exist for any options position into which the Fund enters. Even with respect to exchange-traded options, trading may be suspended on the exchange and prevent the Fund from closing out a position.

The premium charged to the purchaser of an option contract typically depends on the market value, if any, of the option as currently traded, the current market price and historic volatility of the Reference Asset, the difference between such market price and the exercise price, the length of the option period and the interest rate environment.

The Fund will “cover” its obligations when it writes put and call options to the extent required by SEC regulations. With respect to call options, the Fund generally may cover by owning the Reference Asset that may be called, by owning the right to acquire such Reference Asset (at the same or better price) or by segregating assets as described in “Senior Securities,” below. With respect to put options, the Fund generally may cover by owning the right to put such Reference Asset to a third party (at the same or better price) or by segregating assets. Because options on indices are exclusively cash settled, the Fund must cover by segregating assets. The ability to sell the Reference Asset or segregated assets will be limited while the option is in effect. As a result, there is a possibility that the use of cover or segregation could adversely impact the Fund’s portfolio management or ability to meet redemption requests.

Prior to the exercise and expiration date of an options contract, purchasers and writers of options may close out their options position(s) by entering into an offsetting transaction in the same option series (type, exchange, underlying Reference Asset, exercise price and expiration). A closing purchase transaction cancels out the option writer’s position by means of an offsetting purchase of an identical option. Similarly, a closing sale transaction cancels out an option purchaser’s position by means of an offsetting sale of an identical option. In addition, purchasers of exchange-traded options may sell them through the exchange. To the extent that an option expires unexercised, the writer earns a gain equal to the premium received in connection with the sale of the option, and the purchaser incurs a loss equal to the premium paid by it in connection with the purchase of the option.

**Options on Foreign Currencies and Gold.** The Fund may buy put and call options on any currency in which its investments are denominated and gold.

The value of a currency option is dependent upon the value of the currency relative to the U.S. dollar and has no relationship to the investment merits of a foreign security. Because foreign currency transactions occurring in the interbank market involve substantially larger amounts than those that may be involved in the use of foreign currency options, a Fund may be disadvantaged by having to deal in an odd lot market (generally consisting in transactions of less than \$1 million) for the underlying currencies at prices that are less favorable than round lots. To the extent that the U.S. options markets are closed while the market for the underlying currencies are open, significant price and rate movements may take place in the underlying markets that cannot be reflected in the options markets.

**Options on Futures.** Options on futures contracts are similar to options on securities except that an option on a futures contract gives the purchaser the right, in return for the premium paid, to assume a position in a futures contract rather than to purchase or sell a security, at a specified exercise price at any time during the period of the option. Upon exercise of the option, the delivery of the futures position to the holder of the option will be accompanied by transfer to the holder of an accumulated balance representing the amount by which the market price of the futures contract exceeds, in the case of a call, or is less than, in the case of a put, the exercise price of the option on the future.

**Options on Currency Futures and Gold Futures.** Options on currency futures and gold futures contracts are similar to options on foreign currencies or gold except that an option on a futures contract gives the purchaser the right, in return for the premium paid, to assume a position in a futures contract rather than to purchase or sell a currency or gold, at a specified

exercise price at any time during the period of the option. Upon exercise of the option, the delivery of the futures position to the holder of the option will be accompanied by transfer to the holder of an accumulated balance representing the amount by which the market price of the futures contract exceeds, in the case of a call, or is less than, in the case of a put, the exercise price of the option on the future.

**Futures Contracts and Index Futures Contracts.** A futures contract is a bilateral agreement where one party agrees to accept, and the other party agrees to make, delivery of cash or an underlying debt security, as called for in the contract, at a specified date and at an agreed upon price.

An index futures contract involves the delivery of an amount of cash equal to a specified dollar amount multiplied by the difference between the index value at the close of trading of the contract and at the price designated by the futures contract. No physical delivery of the securities comprising the index is made. Generally, these futures contracts are closed out prior to the expiration date of the contracts.

A municipal bond futures contract is based on the value of the Bond Buyer Index (“BBI”) which is comprised of 40 actively traded general obligation and revenue bonds. The rating of a BBI issue must be at least “A.” To be considered, the issue must have at least 19 years remaining to maturity, a first call date between 7 and 16 years, and at least one call at par prior to redemption. No physical delivery of the securities is made in connection with municipal bond futures. Rather these contracts are usually settled in cash if they are not closed out prior to their expiration date.

A Treasury bond futures contract is based on the value of an equivalent 20-year, 6% Treasury bond. Generally, any Treasury bond with a remaining maturity or term to call of 15 years as of the first day of the month in which the contracts are scheduled to be exercised will qualify as a deliverable security pursuant to a Treasury bond futures contract. A Treasury note futures contract is based on the value of an equivalent 10-year, 6% Treasury note. Generally, any Treasury note with a remaining maturity or term to call of 6½ years or 10 years, respectively, as of the first day of the month in which the contracts are scheduled to be exercised will qualify as a deliverable security pursuant to Treasury note futures contract.

Since a number of different Treasury notes will qualify as a deliverable security upon the exercise of the option, the price that the buyer will actually pay for those securities will depend on which ones are actually delivered. Normally, the exercise price of the futures contract is adjusted by a conversion factor that takes into consideration the value of the deliverable security if it were yielding 6% as of the first day of the month in which the contract is scheduled to be exercised.

**Currency Futures and Gold Futures Contracts.** When the Fund enters into a futures contract, it must make an initial deposit known as “initial margin” as a partial guarantee of its performance under the contract. As the value of the currency or gold fluctuates, both parties to the contract are required to make additional margin payments, known as “variation margin” to cover any additional obligation that they may have under the contract.

**Risks of Options Transactions.** Transacting in options exposes the Fund to certain risks. For example, the skills and techniques applicable to options trading may not be the same as those applicable to trading securities, and the Fund may be adversely affected by the Adviser’s inability to accurately predict price movements in Reference Assets. To the extent that the Fund uses options on indices to execute its strategy or hedge its portfolio investments, changes in the value of the Reference Asset (*i.e.*, the index) may not correlate perfectly with (predicted) changes in the value of the portfolio. Further, options on foreign currencies are typically settled exclusively in the relevant foreign currency, and their value normally depends on the value of such currency relative to the U.S. dollar. To the extent that the U.S. options markets are closed while the market for the Reference Asset (foreign currency) is open, significant price and rate movements may occur that are not reflected in the U.S. options market.

Options transactions are subject to brokerage commissions or spreads, and the usage of options may result in a higher portfolio turnover rate and increased brokerage costs, which could reduce Fund returns. In addition, the use of options is subject to regulation, including by the SEC and options exchanges.

**Options Strategies.** The Fund may use options to execute its strategy, enhance returns or hedge its investment portfolio. For example, the Fund may write a call option to attempt to realize, from the receipt of premiums, a greater return than would be realized on the Reference Asset alone. When writing covered call options, however, the Fund will give up the opportunity while the option is in effect to profit from any increase in the Reference Asset’s price above the exercise price. The Fund may also write covered call options is to hedge the potential for a decrease in the value of the Reference Asset.

Similarly, the Fund may buy a put option to limit its risk of loss from a decline in the market value below the exercise price of a Reference Asset through the option period. The amount of any appreciation in the value of the Reference Asset would be partially offset by the amount of the premium paid for the put option.

To the extent that the Fund engages in options transactions for hedging, however, the Fund will be subject to hedging risks. A hedging position taken at the wrong time could have an adverse impact on the Fund. Further, hedging with an index that does not one hundred percent mirror a portfolio introduces the risk of losing money on the hedge and on the underlying position.

**Risks of Currency and Gold Futures and Options on Currency and Gold Futures.** The risk of loss in trading currency futures contracts and in writing options on currency futures contracts can be substantial, due to the low margin deposits required, the extremely high degree of leverage involved in futures and options pricing, and the potential high volatility of the futures markets. As a result, a relatively small price movement in a futures position may result in immediate and substantial loss (as well as gain) to a Fund. Thus, a purchase or sale of a futures contract, and the writing of an option on a futures contract, may result in losses in excess of the amount invested in the position. In the event of adverse price movements, a Fund would continue to be required to make daily cash payments to maintain its required margin. In such situations, if a Fund has insufficient cash, it may have to sell portfolio securities to meet daily margin requirements (and segregation requirements, if applicable) at a time when it may be disadvantageous to do so. In addition, on the settlement date, a Fund may be required to make delivery of the instruments underlying the futures positions it holds.

A Fund could suffer losses if it is unable to close out a currency futures contract or options on currency futures contract because of an illiquid secondary market. Currency futures contracts and options on currency futures contracts may be closed out only on an exchange, which provides a secondary market for such products. However, there can be no assurance that a liquid secondary market will exist for any particular futures product at any specific time. Thus, it may not be possible to close a currency futures or option position. Moreover, most futures exchanges limit the amount of fluctuation permitted in futures contract prices during a single trading day. The daily limit establishes the maximum amount that the price of a futures contract may vary either up or down from the previous day's settlement price at the end of a trading session. Once the daily limit has been reached in a particular type of contract, no trades may be made on that day at a price beyond that limit.

The daily limit governs only price movement during a particular trading day and therefore does not limit potential losses, because the limit may prevent the liquidation of unfavorable positions. Futures contract prices have occasionally moved to the daily limit for several consecutive trading days with little or no trading, thereby preventing prompt liquidation of future positions and subjecting some futures traders to substantial losses. The inability to close futures and options positions also could have an adverse impact on the ability to hedge a portfolio investment or to establish a substitute for a portfolio investment.

A Fund bears the risk that the Adviser will incorrectly predict future market trends. If the Adviser attempts to use a futures contract or an option on a futures contract as a hedge against, or as a substitute for, a portfolio investment, a Fund will be exposed to the risk that the futures position will have or will develop imperfect or no correlation with the portfolio investment. This could cause substantial losses for a Fund. While hedging strategies involving futures products can reduce the risk of loss, they can also reduce the opportunity for gain or even result in losses by offsetting favorable price movements in other Fund investments.

A Fund may use various futures contracts that are relatively new instruments without a significant trading history. As a result, there can be no assurance that an active secondary market in those contracts will develop or continue to exist. A Fund's activities in the futures and options markets may result in higher portfolio turnover rates and additional brokerage costs, which could reduce the Fund's return.

**Margin Purchases.** The Fund may not purchase securities on margin, except that a Fund may use short-term credit for the clearance of the Fund's transactions, and provided that initial and variation margin payments in connection with futures contracts and options on futures contracts shall not constitute purchasing securities on margin.

## **G. Leverage Transactions**

The Fund may use leverage to increase potential returns. Leverage involves special risks and may involve speculative investment techniques. Leverage exists when cash made available to a Fund through an investment technique is used to make additional Fund investments. Leverage transactions include borrowing for other than temporary or emergency

purposes, lending portfolio securities, entering into repurchase agreements, dollar rolls and purchasing securities on a when-issued, delayed delivery or forward commitment basis.

On October 28, 2020, the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”) adopted Rule 18f-4 under the 1940 Act providing for the regulation of a registered investment company’s use of derivatives and certain related instruments. Among other things, Rule 18f-4 limits a fund’s derivatives exposure through a value-at-risk test and requires the adoption and implementation of a derivatives risk management program for certain derivatives users. Subject to certain conditions, limited derivatives users (as defined in Rule 18f-4), however, would not be subject to the full requirements of Rule 18f-4. In connection with the adoption of Rule 18f-4, the SEC also eliminated the asset segregation framework arising from prior SEC guidance for covering derivatives and certain financial instruments. Compliance with Rule 18f-4 will not be required until August 19, 2022. As the Fund comes into compliance, the Fund’s approach to asset segregation and coverage requirements described in this SAI may be impacted. In addition, Rule 18f-4 could restrict the Fund’s ability to engage in certain derivatives transactions and/or increase the costs of such derivatives transactions, which could adversely affect the value or performance of the Fund.

**Borrowing and Reverse Repurchase Agreements.** The Fund shall be permitted to borrow from any bank so long as immediately after such borrowings, there is an asset coverage of at least 300% and that in the event such asset coverage falls below this percentage, the Fund shall reduce the amount of its borrowings, within three days (excluding Sundays and holidays), to an extent that the asset coverage shall be at least 300%. The Fund may borrow money from a bank to, among other things, finance the purchase of securities for its portfolio. Entering into reverse repurchase agreements, pledging securities, and purchasing securities on a when-issued, delayed delivery or forward delivery basis are subject to this limitation. A reverse repurchase agreement is a transaction in which a Fund sells securities to a bank or securities dealer and simultaneously commits to repurchase the securities from the bank or dealer at an agreed upon date and at a price reflecting a market rate of interest unrelated to the sold securities. An investment of a Fund’s assets in reverse repurchase agreements will increase the volatility of the Fund’s NAV. A counterparty to a reverse repurchase agreement must be a primary dealer that reports to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York or one of the largest 100 commercial banks in the United States.

In a reverse repurchase agreement, the Fund sells portfolio securities to another party and agrees to repurchase the securities at an agreed-upon price and date, which reflects an interest payment. Reverse repurchase agreements involve the risk that the other party will fail to return the securities in a timely manner, or at all, which may result in losses to the Fund. The Fund could lose money if it is unable to recover the securities and the value of the collateral held by the Fund is less than the value of the securities. These events could also trigger adverse tax consequences to the Fund. Reverse repurchase agreements also involve the risk that the market value of the securities sold will decline below the price at which the Fund is obligated to repurchase them. Reverse repurchase agreements may be viewed as a form of borrowing by the Fund. When the Fund enters into a reverse repurchase agreement, any fluctuations in the market value of either the securities transferred to another party or the securities in which the proceeds may be invested would affect the market value of the Fund’s assets. During the term of the agreement, the Fund may also be obligated to pledge additional cash and/or securities in the event of a decline in the fair value of the transferred security.

**Securities Lending and Repurchase Agreements.** The Fund may lend portfolio securities in an amount up to 33⅓% of its total assets to brokers, dealers and other financial institutions. In a portfolio securities lending transaction, a Fund receives from the borrower an amount equal to the interest paid or the dividends declared on the loaned securities during the term of the loan as well as the interest on the collateral securities, less any fees (such as finders or administrative fees) the Fund pays in arranging the loan. A Fund may share the interest it receives on the collateral securities with the borrower. Loans are subject to termination at the option of the Fund or the borrower at any time, and the borrowed securities must be returned when the loan is terminated. A Fund may pay fees to arrange for securities loans.

The Fund may enter into repurchase agreements, which are transactions in which a Fund purchases a security and simultaneously agrees to resell that security to the seller at an agreed upon price on an agreed upon future date, normally, one to seven days later. If a Fund enters into a repurchase agreement, it will maintain possession of the purchased securities and any underlying collateral.

Securities loans and repurchase agreements must be continuously collateralized and the collateral must have market value at least equal to the value of the Fund’s loaned securities, plus accrued interest or, in the case of repurchase agreements, equal to the repurchase price of the securities, plus accrued interest.

**Swaps, Caps, Floors and Collars.** The Fund may enter into interest rate, currency or other asset swaps, and may purchase and sell interest rate “caps,” “floors” and “collars.” Interest rate swaps involve the exchange by a Fund and a counterparty of

their respective commitments to pay or receive interest (*e.g.*, an exchange of floating rate payments for fixed rate payments) with respect to a notional amount of principal.

Currency swaps' notional principal amount is tied to one or more currencies, and the exchange commitments can involve payments in the same or different currencies. The purchase of an interest rate cap entitles the purchaser, to the extent that a specified index exceeds a predetermined interest rate, to receive payments of interest on the notional principal amount from the party selling the cap. The purchase of an interest rate floor entitles the purchaser, to the extent that a specified index falls below a predetermined value, to receive payments on a notional principal amount from the party selling such floor. A collar entitles the purchaser to receive payments to the extent a specified interest rate falls outside an agreed range.

The Fund will enter into these transactions primarily to preserve a return or a spread on a particular investment or portion of its portfolio or to protect against any interest rate fluctuations or increase in the price of securities it anticipates purchasing at a later date. The Fund uses these transactions as a hedge and not as a speculative investment, and will enter into the transactions in order to shift the Fund's investment exposure from one type of investment to another.

The use of interest rate protection transactions is a highly specialized activity that involves investment techniques and risks different from those associated with ordinary portfolio securities transactions. If the Adviser incorrectly forecasts market values, interest rates and other applicable factors, there may be considerable impact on a Fund's performance. Even if the Adviser is correct in their forecasts, there is a risk that the transaction may correlate imperfectly with the price of the asset or liability being hedged. Swaps do not involve the delivery of securities or other underlying assets or principal, and are subject to counterparty risk. If the other party to a swap defaults and fails to consummate the transaction, a Fund's risk of loss consists of the net amount of interest payments that the Fund is contractually entitled to receive. Under Internal Revenue Service rules, any lump sum payment received or due under the notional principal contract must be amortized over the life of the contract using the appropriate methodology prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service.

If there is a default by the counterparty to a swap contract, a Fund will be limited to contractual remedies pursuant to the agreements related to the transaction. There is no assurance that a swap contract counterparty will be able to meet its obligations pursuant to the swap contract or that, in the event of a default, the Fund will succeed in pursuing contractual remedies. A Fund thus assumes the risk that it may be delayed in or prevented from obtaining payments owed to it pursuant to a swap contract. However, the amount at risk is only the net unrealized gain, if any, on the swap, not the entire notional amount. The Adviser will closely monitor, subject to the oversight of the Board, the creditworthiness of swap counterparties in order to minimize the risk of swaps.

The net amount of the excess, if any, of a Fund's obligations over its entitlements with respect to each swap contract will be accrued on a daily basis and an amount of segregated assets having an aggregate market value at least equal to the accrued excess will be segregated in accordance with SEC positions.

Leverage creates the risk of magnified capital losses. Losses incurred by a Fund may be magnified by borrowings and other liabilities that cause the total assets of the Fund to exceed the equity base of the Fund. Leverage may involve the creation of a liability that requires a Fund to pay interest (for instance, reverse repurchase agreements) or the creation of a liability that does not entail any interest costs (for instance, forward commitment costs).

The risks of leverage include a higher volatility of the NAV of a Fund's securities which may be magnified by favorable or adverse market movements or changes in the cost of cash obtained by leveraging and the yield from invested cash. So long as a Fund is able to realize a net return on its investment portfolio that is higher than interest expense incurred, if any, leverage will result in higher current net investment income for the Fund than if the Fund were not leveraged. Changes in interest rates and related economic factors could cause the relationship between the cost of leveraging and the yield to change so that rates involved in the leveraging arrangement may substantially increase relative to the yield on the obligations in which the proceeds of the leveraging have been invested. To the extent that the interest expense involved in leveraging approaches the net return on a Fund's investment portfolio, the benefit of leveraging will be reduced, and, if the interest expense incurred as a result of leveraging on borrowings were to exceed the net return to investors, the Fund's use of leverage would result in a lower rate of return than if the Fund were not leveraged. In an extreme case, if a Fund's current investment income were not sufficient to meet the interest expense of leveraging, it could be necessary for the Fund to liquidate certain of its investments at an inappropriate time.

## **H. Illiquid and Restricted Securities**

The Fund may not acquire securities or invest in repurchase agreements if, as a result, more than 15% of the Fund's net assets (taken at current value) would be invested in illiquid securities. Generally, an illiquid security is any investment that

may not reasonably be expected to be sold or disposed of in current market conditions in seven calendar days or less without the sale or disposition significantly changing the market value of the investment. Illiquid securities may be difficult for the Fund to value or dispose of due to the absence of an active trading market. Illiquid securities include unregistered and “restricted securities,” and repurchase agreements maturing in greater than seven days.

“Restricted securities” generally are securities that may be resold to the public pursuant to an effective registration statement under the 1933 Act or an exemption from registration. Regulation S under the 1933 Act is one exemption from registration. It permits, under certain circumstances, the resale of restricted securities in offshore transactions. Rule 144A under the 1933 Act is another exemption. It permits the resale of certain restricted securities to qualified institutional buyers.

Since its adoption by the SEC in 1990, Rule 144A has facilitated trading of restricted securities among qualified institutional investors. To the extent restricted securities held by the Fund qualify under Rule 144A and an institutional market develops for those securities, the Fund expects that it will be able to dispose of the securities without registering the resale of such securities under the 1933 Act. However, to the extent that a robust market for such 144A securities does not develop, or a market develops but experiences periods of illiquidity, investments in Rule 144A securities could increase the level of the Fund’s illiquidity.

Where an exemption from registration under the 1933 Act is unavailable, or where an institutional market is limited, a Fund may, in certain circumstances, be permitted to require the issuer of restricted securities held by the Fund to file a registration statement to register the resale of such securities under the 1933 Act. In such case, the Fund will typically be obligated to pay all or part of the registration expenses, and a considerable period may elapse between the decision to sell and the time the Fund may be permitted to resell a security under an effective registration statement. If, during such a period, adverse market conditions were to develop, or the value of the security were to decline, the Fund might obtain a less favorable price than prevailed when it decided to sell. Restricted securities for which no market exists are priced at fair value pursuant to a methodology approved by the Board.

**Determination of Liquidity.** Rule 22e-4 under the 1940 Act requires, among other things, that the Fund establish a liquidity risk management program (“LRMP”) that is reasonably designed to assess and manage liquidity risk. Rule 22e-4 defines “liquidity risk” as the risk that a fund could not meet requests to redeem shares issued by the fund without significant dilution of the remaining investors’ interests in the fund. The Fund has implemented a LRMP to meet the relevant requirements. Additionally, the Board, including a majority of the Independent Trustees, approved the designation of the Fund’s LRMP administrator to administer such program and will review no less frequently than annually a written report prepared by the LRMP administrator that addresses the operation of the LRMP and assesses its adequacy and effectiveness of implementation. Among other things, the LRMP provides for the classification of each Fund investment as a “highly liquid investment,” “moderately liquid investment,” “less liquid investment” or “illiquid investment.” The liquidity risk classifications of the Fund’s investments are determined after reasonable inquiry and taking into account relevant market, trading and investment-specific considerations. To the extent that a Fund investment is deemed to be an “illiquid investment” or a “less liquid investment,” the Fund can expect to be exposed to greater illiquidity risk.

## **I. Investment Company Securities (including Exchange-Traded Funds) and Exchange-Traded Products**

The Fund at times may invest in shares of other investment companies and exchange-traded funds (“ETFs”), including openend funds, closed-end funds, business development companies (“BDCs”), and interests in unit investment trusts. BDCs are a specialized form of closed-end fund that invest generally in small developing companies and financially troubled businesses. BDCs invest in private companies and thinly traded securities of public companies, including debt instruments. Generally, little public information exists for private and thinly traded companies and there is a risk that investors may not be able to make fully informed investment decisions. Many debt investments in which a BDC may invest will not be rated by a credit rating agency and will be below investment grade quality. Risks faced by BDCs include: competition for limited BDC investment opportunities; the liquidity of a BDC’s private investments; uncertainty as to the value of a BDC’s private investments; risks associated with access to capital and leverage; and reliance on the management of a BDC. The Fund’s investments in BDCs are similar and include portfolio company risk, leverage risk, market and valuation risk, price volatility risk and liquidity risk.

The Fund may invest in investment company securities advised by the Fund’s adviser or sub-adviser. Investments in the securities of other investment companies may involve duplication of advisory fees and certain other expenses. By investing in another investment company, the Fund becomes a shareholder of that investment company. As a result, Fund shareholders indirectly will bear the Fund’s proportionate share of the fees and expenses paid by shareholders of the other investment company, in addition to the fees and expenses Fund shareholders directly bear in connection with the Fund’s own operations. These other fees and expenses are reflected as Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses and are included in the Fees and Expenses

Table for the Fund in its Prospectus, if applicable. Investment in other investment companies may involve the payment of substantial premiums above the value of such issuer's portfolio securities.

An investment in an ETF generally presents the same primary risks as an investment in a conventional mutual fund (*i.e.*, one that is not exchange-traded) that has the same investment objective, strategies, and policies. The price of an ETF can fluctuate within a wide range, and a Fund could lose money investing in an ETF if the prices of the securities owned by the ETF go down. In addition, because ETFs are traded on an exchange, ETFs are subject to the following risks that do not apply to conventional funds: (1) investments in ETPs are also subject to brokerage and other trading costs, which could result in greater expenses to the Fund; (2) the market price of the ETF's shares may trade at a discount or premium to their NAV per share; (3) an active trading market for an ETF's shares may not develop or be maintained; and (4) 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.

Under Section 12(d)(1)(A) of the 1940 Act, however, the Fund's investments in such securities are generally limited to 3% of the outstanding voting stock of any one company, 5% of the Fund's total assets in any one company, and 10% of the Fund's total assets in investment companies generally.

There are, however, several exceptions to these "3/5/10 limits." For example, under Section 12(d)(1)(F) of the 1940 Act, the Fund may invest more than 5% of its total assets in another investment company and more than 10% of its total assets among multiple investment companies, provided that it and its affiliates limit their investment in an acquired fund to 3% of the acquired fund's outstanding voting securities and the investing fund limits any sales load it charges to 1.5%. Further, the investing fund must comply with certain redemption and voting restrictions. The Fund may also rely on Rule 12d1-4 under the 1940 Act to invest in acquired funds, and under Rule 12d1-4, acquired funds themselves may invest up to 10% of their assets in other funds.

In addition to investing in other funds, the Fund may invest in exchange-traded products ("ETPs") other than ETFs, including exchange-traded notes ("ETNs"). ETNs are different from ETFs in that they are not secured by an underlying pool of assets, but rather are notes (or debt securities) secured only by the ability of the issuer to pay. As a result, ETN shares are subject to the same risks described for "Corporate Debt Obligations" herein.

The Fund may also invest in ETPs that are neither ETFs nor ETNs. Such ETPs may be organized as commodity pools registered under the Commodity Exchange Act or as grantor trusts. Such ETPs are not registered under the 1940 Act because they invest in, for example, commodities or currencies rather than securities. If the Fund invests in an ETP, including an ETN, it will be subject to substantially similar risks as are discussed above regarding ETFs. Notably, however, the 3/5/10 limits only apply to ETPs that are ETFs. Other types of ETPs are not subject to the 3/5/10 limits. There are, however, other risks associated with investments in ETPs, which, are detailed below in "Taxation - Certain Tax Rules Applicable to the Fund Transactions."

## **J. Gold and Gold-Related Securities**

The Merk Hard Currency Fund may invest in gold-related securities. Gold-related securities include ETPs that invest directly in gold bullion, and forward and futures contracts. Investments in gold-related securities may be subject to economic factors that are not generally present in other securities not related to the gold industry. Investments related to gold and other precious metals and minerals are considered speculative and are affected by a variety of worldwide economic, financial and political factors.

The gold industry can be significantly affected by international monetary and political developments such as currency devaluations or revaluations, central bank movements, global or regional economic and financial events, or currency exchange rates.

Prices of gold-related securities may fluctuate sharply due to changes in inflation or expectations regarding inflation in various countries, the availability of supplies of gold, changes in industrial and commercial demand, gold sales by governments, central banks or international agencies, investment speculation, monetary and other economic policies of various governments.

## **K. Natural Resource-Related Investments**

The Merk Hard Currency Fund may invest in companies involved in the natural resource sector, as well as securities and other instruments whose value is tied to natural resources. The Fund's investments in natural resources, securities and other instruments whose value is tied to natural resources and securities of companies involved in the natural resources sector (collectively, "natural resources investments") may be affected by natural disasters (such as fires and floods), political events affecting access to a natural resource (such as a military coup in a country with control over the resource), monetary policies and interest rates (including inflationary and deflationary signals), trade imbalances, social and political agendas regarding energy use and conservation, activity in the commodities markets, government regulations (both foreign and domestic) that affect the supply of and/or demand for a natural resource and the public's perception of any and/or all of the above. The profitability and value of the Fund's investments in natural resources investments may, therefore, be affected by the same. Although natural resources may at times experience substantial short-term price fluctuations, they are less subject to company-specific risks than are the equity securities of companies in the natural resources sector; as a result, the prices of natural resources may be less volatile than the equity securities of companies in the natural resources sector. Further, natural resources investments may perform differently than the market as a whole. To the extent that the Fund makes natural resources investments, therefore, the Fund may perform differently than the overall market. In addition, the Fund may incur higher custody and transaction costs in connection with investments in natural resources and will not realize any income from such investments.

## **L. Temporary Defensive Position and Cash Investments**

The Fund may assume a temporary defensive position and may invest without limit in money market instruments that are of high quality. High quality money market instruments are those instruments that are rated in one of the two highest short-term rating categories or, if not rated, determined by the Adviser to be of comparable quality. The Fund also may invest in high quality money market instruments pending investment of cash balances.

Money market instruments usually have maturities of one year or less and fixed rates of return. The money market instruments in which the Fund may invest include U.S. Government Securities, commercial paper, time deposits, bankers acceptances and certificates of deposit issued by domestic banks, corporate notes and short-term bonds and money market mutual funds. The Fund may only invest in money market mutual funds to the extent permitted by the 1940 Act.

The money market instruments in which the Fund may invest may have variable or floating rates of interest. These obligations include master demand notes that permit investment of fluctuating amounts at varying rates of interest pursuant to a direct arrangement with the issuer of the instrument. The issuer of these obligations often has the right, after a given period, to prepay the outstanding principal amount of the obligations upon a specified number of days' notice. These obligations generally are not traded, nor generally is there an established secondary market for these obligations. To the extent a demand note does not have a 7-day or shorter demand feature and there is no readily available market for the obligation, it is treated as an illiquid security.

The Fund may hold cash, which may lead to missed investment opportunities. If the Fund hold cash uninvested, they will be subject to the credit risk of the depositing institution holding the cash.

## **M. Cyber-Security Risk**

The Fund, and its service providers, may be prone to operational and information security risks resulting from cyber-attacks. Cyber-attacks include, among other behaviors, stealing or corrupting data maintained online or digitally, denial of service attacks on websites, the unauthorized release of confidential information or various other forms of cyber security breaches. Cyber-attacks affecting the Fund or their third-party service providers may adversely impact the Fund. For instance, cyber-attacks may interfere with the processing of shareholder transactions, impact a Fund's ability to calculate their NAV, cause the release of private shareholder information or confidential business information, impede trading, subject a Fund to regulatory fines or financial losses and/or cause reputational damage. The Fund may also incur additional costs for cyber security risk management purposes. While the Fund's service providers have established business continuity plans in the event of, and risk management systems to prevent, such cyber-attacks, there are inherent limitations in such plans and systems including the possibility that certain risks have not been identified. Furthermore, the Fund cannot control the cyber security plans and systems put in place by their service providers or any other third parties whose operations may affect the Fund or its shareholders. Similar types of cyber security risks are also present for issues or securities in which the Fund may invest, which could result in material adverse consequences for such issuers and may cause the Fund's investment in such companies to lose value.

## **N. Large Shareholder Transaction Risk**

The Fund may experience adverse effects when a large shareholder redeems or purchases large amounts of shares of the Fund. Such redemptions may cause the Fund to sell securities at times when it would not otherwise do so, disrupt the Fund's operations, or borrow money (at a cost to the Fund), which may negatively impact the Fund's performance and liquidity. Similarly, large purchases may adversely affect the Fund's performance to the extent that the Fund is delayed in investing new cash and is required to maintain a larger cash position than it ordinarily would. These transactions may also accelerate the realization of taxable income to shareholders if such sales of investments resulted in gains, and may also increase transaction costs.

## **O. Market Turbulence**

The greatest risk of investing in a mutual fund is that its returns will fluctuate, and you could lose money. Turbulence in the financial sector may result in an unusually high degree of volatility in the financial markets. Both domestic and foreign equity markets have experienced significant volatility and turmoil, with issuers that have exposure to the real estate, mortgage and credit markets particularly affected. It is uncertain whether or for how long these conditions could occur.

Reduced liquidity in credit and fixed income markets may adversely affect many issuers worldwide. This reduced liquidity may result in less money being available to purchase raw materials, goods and services from emerging markets, which may, in turn, bring down the prices of these economic staples. It may also result in emerging market issuers having more difficulty obtaining financing, which may, in turn, cause a decline in their stock prices. These events and possible market turbulence may have an adverse effect on the Fund.

The financial markets in which the Fund invests are subject to price volatility that could cause losses in the Fund. Market volatility may result from varied predictable and unpredictable factors. The recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus, first detected in December 2019, has resulted in disruptions to the economies of many nations, individual companies and the markets in general, the impact of which cannot necessarily be foreseen at the present time. The impact of the novel coronavirus, and other such future infectious diseases in certain regions or countries may perform better or worse due to the nature or level of their public health response or due to other factors. Health crises caused by the recent coronavirus outbreak or future infectious diseases may exacerbate other pre-existing political, social and economic risks in certain countries.

The impact of the outbreak may be short term or may last for an extended period of time. This pandemic and other epidemics and pandemics that may arise in the future could result in continued volatility in the financial markets and lead to increased levels of Fund redemptions, which could have a negative impact on the Fund and could adversely affect the Fund's performance, resulting in losses to your investment.

## INVESTMENT LIMITATIONS

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The Trust, on behalf of the Fund, has adopted the following investment policies which are fundamental policies that may not be changed without the affirmative vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund. "A majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund," as defined by the 1940 Act, means the affirmative vote of the lesser of (1) more than 50% of the outstanding shares of the Fund, or (2) 67% or more of the shares present at a meeting, if more than 50% of the outstanding shares are represented at the meeting in person or by proxy.

The investment objective is a fundamental policy for Merk Hard Currency Fund and therefore may not be changed without shareholder approval.

For purposes of the Fund's investment limitations, all percentage limitations apply immediately after an investment. Except with respect to the fundamental policy relating to borrowing money, set forth in (1) below, if a percentage limitation is adhered to at the time of an investment, a later increase or decrease in the percentage resulting from any change in value or net assets will not result in a violation of such restrictions. If at any time the Fund's borrowings exceed its limitations due to a decline in net assets, such borrowings will be reduced within three days (excluding Sundays and holidays) to the extent necessary to comply with the limitation.

**Fundamental Limitations.** The Fund has adopted the following fundamental investment limitations.

### **The Fund may not:**

#### **1. Borrowing Money**

Borrow money if, as a result, outstanding borrowings would exceed an amount equal to 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of the Fund's total assets.

#### **2. Concentration**

Purchase a security if, as a result, more than 25% of the Fund's total assets would be invested in securities of issuers conducting their principal business activities in the same industry. For purposes of this limitation, there is no limit on investments in U.S. Government Securities and repurchase agreements covering U.S. Government Securities.

#### **3. Underwriting Activities**

Underwrite securities issued by other persons except, to the extent that in connection with the disposition of portfolio securities, the Fund may be deemed to be an underwriter.

#### **4. Making Loans**

Make loans to other parties. For purposes of this limitation, entering into repurchase agreements, lending securities and acquiring any debt security are not deemed to be the making of loans.

#### **5. Purchases and Sales of Real Estate**

Purchase or sell real estate, except that, to the extent permitted by applicable law, the Fund may (1) invest in securities or other instruments directly secured by real estate, and (2) invest in securities or other instruments issued by issuers that invest in real estate.

#### **6. Purchases and Sales of Commodities**

Purchase or sell physical commodities unless acquired as a result of ownership of securities or other instruments (but this shall not prevent the Fund from purchasing or selling options and futures contracts or from investing in securities or other instruments backed by physical commodities).

#### **7. Issuance of Senior Securities**

Issue senior securities except pursuant to Section 18 of the 1940 Act.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to borrowing money set forth in (1) above, the 1940 Act permits the Fund to borrow money in amounts of up to one-third of the Fund's total assets, at the time of borrowing, from banks for any purpose (the Fund's total assets include the amounts being borrowed). To limit the risks attendant to borrowing, the 1940 Act

requires the Fund to maintain at all times an “asset coverage” of at least 300% of the amount of its borrowings (not including borrowings for temporary purposes in an amount not exceeding 5% of the value of the Fund’s total assets). In the event that such asset coverage falls below this percentage, the Fund is required to reduce the amount of its borrowings within three days (not including Sundays and holidays) so that the asset coverage is restored to at least 300%. Asset coverage means the ratio that the value of the Fund’s total assets (including amounts borrowed), minus liabilities other than borrowings, bears to the aggregate amount of all borrowings.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to concentration set forth in (2) above, the Fund normally assesses its industry concentration by categorizing its investments by industry as identified by the Standard Industrial Classification (“SIC”) system. The SIC system categorizes issuers by industry based on the issuers’ primary business activities. No industry within a group of industries may individually represent greater than 25% of a Fund’s total assets. The Fund will consider the concentration policies of the underlying investment companies in which it invests.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to making loans set forth in (5) above, the 1940 Act does not prohibit the Fund from making loans; however, SEC staff interpretations currently prohibit registered investment companies from lending more than one-third of their total assets, except through the purchase of debt obligations.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to investing in real estate set forth in (6) above, the Fund may, to the extent permitted by applicable law, invest in securities or other instruments directly or indirectly secured by real estate and invest in securities or other instruments issued by issuers that invest in real estate. Investments in securities of issuers that are exposed to or invested in the real estate business will not be deemed to be a purchase or sale of real estate.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to issuing senior securities set forth in (8) above, “senior securities” are defined as Fund obligations that have a priority over the Fund’s shares with respect to the payment of dividends or the distribution of Fund assets. The 1940 Act prohibits the Fund from issuing any class of senior securities or selling any senior securities of which it is the issuer, except that the Fund is permitted to borrow from a bank if consistent with the fundamental policy set forth in (1) above. The policy in (8) above will be interpreted not to prevent collateral arrangements with respect to swaps, options, forwards or futures contracts or other derivatives, or the posting of initial or variation margin. The Fund will segregate liquid assets with respect to certain leveraged positions in accordance with requirements under Section 18 of the 1940 Act and current applicable SEC staff interpretations.

### A. Board of Trustees

The Trust is governed by its Board of Trustees (the “Board” or “Trustees”). The Board oversees the management and operations of the Trust and the Fund, in accordance with federal law, Delaware law and the stated policies of the Fund. The Board oversees the Trust’s officers and service providers, including the Adviser, which is responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of the Fund based on policies and agreements reviewed and approved by the Board. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Board regularly interacts with and receives reports from senior personnel of service providers and the Trust’s Chief Compliance Officer (“CCO”). The Board also is assisted by the Trust’s independent auditor (which reports directly to the Trust’s Audit Committee), independent counsel and other experts as appropriate. The Trustees serve until their respective successors have been elected and qualified or until their earlier death, resignation or removal.

The Fund does not hold itself out as related to any other series within the Trust for purposes of investment and investor services, nor does it share the same investment adviser with any other series. As a result, the term “Fund Complex” applies only to the Fund.

**Board Structure and Related Matters.** Independent Trustees constitute at least a majority of the Board members. An Independent Trustee serves as Independent Chair of the Board. The Independent Chair’s responsibilities include: setting an agenda for each meeting of the Board; presiding at all meetings of the Board and Independent Trustees; and serving as a liaison with other Trustees, the Trust’s officers, other management personnel and counsel to the Fund. The Independent Chair also performs such other duties as the Board may from time to time determine.

The Trustees discharge their responsibilities collectively as a Board, as well as through Board committees, each of which operates pursuant to a charter or procedures approved by the Board that delineates the specific responsibilities of that committee. The Board has established three standing committees: the Audit Committee, the Nominating Committee and the Qualified Legal Compliance Committee. The members and responsibilities of each Board committee are summarized below.

The Board periodically evaluates its structure and composition as well as various aspects of its operations. The Board believes that its leadership structure, including its Independent Chair position and its committees, is appropriate for the Trust in light of, among other factors, the asset size and nature of the Fund, the number of funds overseen by the Board, the arrangements for the conduct of the Fund’s operations, the number of Trustees and the Board’s responsibilities. On an annual basis, the Board conducts a self-evaluation that considers, among other matters, whether the Board and its committees are functioning effectively and whether, given the size and composition of the Board and each of its committees, the Trustees are able to oversee effectively the number of funds.

The Board holds four regularly scheduled meetings each year, which are normally expected to be in person. The Board may hold special meetings, as needed, either in person or by telephone, to address matters arising between regular meetings. At least once per quarter, during a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board, the Independent Trustees meet without the presence of interested Trustees.

The Trustees are identified in the table below, which provides information as to their principal business occupations held during the last five years and certain other information. Each Trustee serves until his or her death, resignation or removal. The address for all Trustees is c/o Apex Fund Services, Three Canal Plaza, Suite 600, Portland, Maine 04101. John Y. Keffer, a former Trustee of the Trust, has been appointed as a Trustee Emeritus by the Board. As Trustee Emeritus, Mr. Keffer will not have a vote with respect to Trust matters; however, Mr. Keffer may attend Board meetings.

Name and Year of Birth	Position with the Trust	Length of Time Served	Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years	Number of Series in Fund Complex Overseen By Trustee	Other Directorships Held By Trustee During Past Five Years
<b>Independent Trustees</b>					
David Tucker Born: 1958	Trustee; Chairman of the Board	Since 2011 and Chairman since 2018	Director, Blue Sky Experience (a charitable endeavor) since 2008; Senior Vice President & General Counsel, American Century Companies (an investment management firm) 1998-2008.	1	Trustee, Forum Funds II and U.S. Global Investors Funds
Mark D. Moyer Born: 1959	Trustee	Since 2018	Chief Financial Officer, Freedom House (a NGO advocating political freedom and democracy) 2017-2021; independent consultant providing interim CFO services, principally to non-profit organizations 2011-2017.	1	Trustee, Forum Funds II and U.S. Global Investors Funds
Jennifer Brown-Strabley Born: 1964	Trustee	Since 2018	Principal, Portland Global Advisors (a registered investment adviser) 1996-2010.	1	Trustee, Forum Funds II and U.S. Global Investors Funds
<b>Interested Trustees<sup>(1)</sup></b>					
Jessica Chase Born: 1970	Trustee	Since 2018	Director, Apex Fund Services since 2019; Senior Vice President, Atlantic Fund Services 2008-2019.	1	Trustee, Forum Funds II and U.S. Global Investors Funds

<sup>(1)</sup> Jessica Chase is currently an interested person of the Trust, as defined in the 1940 Act, due to her affiliation with Apex Fund Services and her role as President of the Trust.

In addition to the information set forth in the table above, each Trustee possesses other relevant qualifications, experience, attributes or skills. The following provides additional information about these qualifications and experience.

**David Tucker:** Mr. Tucker has extensive experience in the investment management industry, including experience in senior management, legal and compliance roles at two large mutual fund complexes; service on various committees of the Investment Company Institute (“ICI”); and director of ICI Mutual (a mutual insurance company sponsored by the investment company industry), including service as chairman of the underwriting, risk and fraud committees of ICI Mutual’s board of directors. Mr. Tucker actively serves charitable organizations in the metropolitan Kansas City area.

**Mark D. Moyer:** Mr. Moyer has extensive experience with finance. He has served as chief financial officer for two non-governmental organizations and a publicly-listed integrated media company. Mr. Moyer has also served as an adjunct professor of accounting at Fairfield University.

**Jennifer Brown-Strabley:** Ms. Brown-Strabley has extensive experience in the financial services and investment management industry, including institutional sales experience in global fixed-income and related quantitative research. Ms. Brown-Strabley also has experience in business start-up and operations and as a former principal of a registered investment adviser, for which she continues to provide consulting advice from time to time.

**Jessica Chase:** Ms. Chase has extensive experience in the fund services industry, including senior management roles overseeing the mutual fund and hedge fund accounting operations for a large bank provider and business development for a

fund service provider specializing in third-party mutual fund administration. Ms. Chase serves as principal executive officer for certain investment companies.

**Risk Oversight.** Consistent with its responsibility for oversight of the Trust and the Fund, the Board oversees the management of risks relating to the administration and operation of the Trust and the Fund. The Adviser, as part of its responsibilities for the day-to-day operations of the Fund, is responsible for day-to-day risk management. The Board, in the exercise of its reasonable business judgment, also separately considers potential risks that may impact the Fund. The Board performs this risk management oversight directly and, as to certain matters, through its committees (described below) and through the Independent Trustees. The following provides an overview of the principal, but not all, aspects of the Board’s oversight of risk management for the Trust and the Fund.

In general, the Fund's risks include, among others, investment risk, valuation risk, compliance risk and operational risk. The Board has adopted, and periodically reviews, policies and procedures designed to address these and other risks to the Trust and the Fund. In addition, under the general oversight of the Board, the Adviser and other service providers have themselves adopted a variety of policies, procedures and controls designed to address particular risks. Different processes, procedures and controls are employed with respect to different types of risks. Further, the Adviser oversees and regularly monitors the investments, operations and compliance of the Fund’s investments.

The Board also oversees risk management for the Trust and the Fund through review of regular reports, presentations and other information from officers of the Trust and other persons. Senior officers of the Trust, senior officers of the Adviser and the CCO regularly report to the Board on a range of matters, including those relating to risk management. In this regard, the Board periodically receives reports regarding other service providers to the Trust, either directly or through the CCO. On at least a quarterly basis, the Independent Trustees meet with the CCO to discuss matters relating to the Fund's compliance program. Further, at least annually, the Board receives a report from the CCO regarding the effectiveness of the Fund's compliance program.

The Board receives regular reports from a Valuation Committee, composed of the Principal Executive Officer, the Principal Financial Officer, the CCO, a senior fund accounting member, a senior representative from the Administrator’s regulatory administration group and a representative of the Adviser. The Valuation Committee operates pursuant to the Trust’s Valuation and Error Correction Policy (the “Valuation Policy”), as approved by the Board. The Valuation Committee reports to the Board on the pricing of the Fund's shares and the valuation of the Fund's portfolio securities; recommends, subject to approval by the Board, independent pricing services to provide a value for Fund assets; makes and monitors fair value determinations pursuant to the Valuation Policy; and carries out any other functions delegated to it by the Board relating to the valuation of Fund assets.

The Board also regularly receives reports from the Adviser with respect to the investments and securities trading of the Fund. For example, typically, the Board receives reports, presentations and other information from the Adviser on at least an annual basis in connection with the Board’s consideration of the renewal of the investment advisory agreement between the Adviser and the Trust on behalf of the Fund (the “Advisory Agreement”). Also, if applicable, the Board receives reports from the Adviser and other service providers in connection with the Board’s consideration of the renewal of any distribution plan of the Fund under Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act. Senior officers of the Trust and senior officers of the Adviser also report regularly to the Audit Committee on valuation matters, internal controls and accounting and financial reporting policies and practices. In addition, the Audit Committee receives regular reports from the Trust’s independent auditors on internal control and financial reporting matters.

**Trustee Ownership in the Fund and the Fund Complex.** The following table sets forth each Trustee’s ownership of the Fund and the Fund Complex.

Trustees	Dollar Range of Beneficial Ownership in the Fund as of December 31, 2021	Aggregate Dollar Range of Ownership as of December 31, 2021 in all Registered Investment Companies Overseen by Trustee in the Fund Complex
<b>Independent Trustees</b>		
David Tucker	None	None
Mark D. Moyer	None	None
Jennifer Brown-Strabley	None	None

Interested Trustee		
Jessica Chase	None	None

## B. Principal Officers of the Trust

The officers of the Trust conduct and supervise its daily business. As of the date of this SAI, the officers of the Trust, their years of birth and their principal occupations during the past five calendar years are as set forth below. Each officer serves until his or her death, resignation or removal and replacement. The business address of each officer is c/o Apex Fund Services, Three Canal Plaza, Suite 600, Portland, Maine 04101.

Name and Year of Birth	Position with the Trust	Length of Time Served	Principal Occupation(s) During Past 5 Years
Jessica Chase Born: 1970	President; Principal Executive Officer	Since 2015	Director, Apex Fund Services since 2019. Senior Vice President, Atlantic Fund Services 2008-2019.
Karen Shaw Born: 1972	Treasurer; Principal Financial Officer	Since 2008	Senior Vice President, Apex Fund Services since 2019; Senior Vice President, Atlantic Fund Services 2008-2019.
Zachary Tackett Born: 1988	Vice President; Secretary and Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer	Since 2014	Senior Counsel, Apex Fund Services since 2019; Counsel, Atlantic Fund Services 2014-2019.
Michael J. McKeen Born: 1971	Vice President	Since 2009	Senior Vice President, Apex Fund Services since 2019; Senior Vice President, Atlantic Fund Services 2008-2019.
Timothy Bowden Born: 1969	Vice President	Since 2009	Manager, Apex Fund Services since 2019; Manager, Atlantic Fund Services 2008-2019.
Geoffrey Ney Born: 1975	Vice President	Since 2013	Manager, Apex Fund Services since 2019; Manager, Atlantic Fund Services 2013-2019.
Carlyn Edgar Born: 1963	Chief Compliance Officer and Vice President	Chief Compliance Officer 2008-2016 and 2021-current; Vice President since 2008	Senior Vice President, Apex Fund Services since 2019; Senior Vice President, Atlantic Fund Services 2008-2019

## C. Ownership of Securities of the Adviser and Related Companies

As of December 31, 2021, no Independent Trustee (or any of his or her immediate family members) owned beneficially or of record, securities of any Trust investment adviser, the Trust's principal underwriter, or any person (other than a registered investment company) directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by or under common control with any Trust investment adviser or principal underwriter.

## D. Information Concerning Trust Committees

**Audit Committee.** The Trust's Audit Committee, which typically meets quarterly, consists of Messrs. Tucker, Moyer, and Ms. Brown-Strabley, constituting all of the Independent Trustees. Pursuant to a charter adopted by the Board, the Audit Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its responsibility for oversight of the quality and integrity of the accounting, auditing and financial reporting practices of the Trust. It is directly responsible for the appointment, termination, compensation and oversight of work of the independent auditors to the Trust. In so doing, the Audit Committee reviews the methods, scope and results of the audits and audit fees charged, and reviews the Trust's internal accounting procedures and controls. During the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022, the Audit Committee met four times.

**Nominating Committee.** The Trust’s Nominating Committee, which meets when necessary, consists of Messrs. Tucker, Moyer, and Ms. Brown-Strabley, constituting all of the Independent Trustees. Pursuant to a charter adopted by the Board, the Nominating Committee is charged with the duty of nominating all Trustees and committee members and presenting these nominations to the Board. The Nominating Committee will not consider any nominees for Trustee recommended by security holders. During the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022, the Nominating Committee did not meet.

**Qualified Legal Compliance Committee.** The Qualified Legal Compliance Committee (the “QLCC”), which meets when necessary, consists of Messrs. Tucker, Moyer, and Ms. Brown-Strabley, constituting all of the Independent Trustees. The QLCC evaluates and recommends resolutions to reports from attorneys servicing the Trust regarding evidence of material violations of applicable federal and state law or the breach of fiduciary duties under applicable federal and state law by the Trust or an employee or agent of the Trust. During the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022, the QLCC did not meet.

**E. Compensation of Trustees and Officers**

For the year ended December 31, 2021, each Trustee was paid an annual fee of \$31,000 for service to the Trust. The Chairman of the Board was paid an annual fee of \$41,000. The Chairman of the Audit Committee was paid an additional fee of \$2,000 annually. Effective January 1, 2022, each Trustee will receive an annual fee of \$45,000 for service to the Trust, and the Chairman of the Board will receive an annual fee of \$55,000. The Chairman of the Audit Committee will continue to receive an additional fee of \$2,000 annually. The Trustees and Chairman may receive additional fees for special Board meetings. Each Trustee is also reimbursed for all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with his or her duties as a Trustee, including travel and related expenses incurred in attending Board meetings. No officer of the Trust is compensated by the Trust, but officers are reimbursed for travel and related expenses incurred in attending Board meetings held outside of Portland, Maine.

The following table sets forth the fees paid to each Trustee by the Fund and the Fund Complex for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022.

Trustee	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund	Pension or Retirement Benefits Accrued as part of Fund Expenses	Total Compensation from Fund Complex
<b>Independent Trustees</b>			
David Tucker	\$1,844	N/A	\$1,844
Mark D. Moyer	\$1,511	N/A	\$1,511
Jennifer Brown-Strabley	\$1,780	N/A	\$1,780
<b>Interested Trustee</b>			
Jessica Chase	\$0	N/A	\$0

**F. Investment Adviser**

**Services of Adviser.** The Adviser serves as investment adviser to the Fund pursuant to the Advisory Agreement. Under the Advisory Agreement, the Adviser furnishes, at its own expense, all services, facilities, and personnel necessary in connection with managing the Fund’s investments and effecting portfolio transactions for the Fund. The Adviser may compensate brokers or other service providers (“Financial Intermediaries”) out of its own assets, and not as additional charges to the Fund, in connection with the sale and distribution of shares of the Fund and/or servicing of these shares.

**Ownership of Adviser.** The Adviser is a Delaware limited liability company. Axel Merk is the sole Managing Member and owner of the Adviser.

**Information Concerning Accounts Managed by Portfolio Manager.** The following table provides information regarding other accounts managed by the portfolio manager as of March 31, 2022:

Name of Portfolio Manager	Number of Other Accounts Managed and Assets by Account Type			Number of Accounts and Assets for Which Advisory Fee is Performance Based		
	Registered Investment Companies	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	Other Accounts	Registered Investment Companies	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	Other Accounts
Axel Merk	1 account \$510.30 million	1 account \$671.46 million	2 accounts \$0.57 million	None	1 account \$6.0 million	None

As of March 31, 2022, Mr. Merk serves as portfolio manager to the Merk Hard Currency Fund, a series of the Trust.

**Conflicts of Interest.** Actual or apparent conflicts of interest may arise when the portfolio manager has day-to-day management responsibilities with respect to more than one fund or other account. More specifically, portfolio managers who manage multiple funds and/or other accounts may be presented with the following conflicts:

- The management of multiple client accounts may result in the portfolio manager devoting unequal time and attention to the management of the Fund. The Adviser may seek to manage such competing interests for the time and attention of the portfolio manager by having the portfolio manager focus on a particular investment discipline.
- If the portfolio manager identifies a limited investment opportunity which may be suitable for more than one account, the Fund may be unable to take full advantage of that opportunity due to an allocation of filled purchase or sale orders across all eligible accounts. To deal with these situations, the Adviser has adopted procedures for allocating portfolio transactions across multiple accounts.
- With respect to securities transactions for the Fund, the Adviser determines which broker to use to execute each order, consistent with its duty to seek best execution of the transaction. However, with respect to certain other accounts (such as other pooled investment vehicles that are not registered mutual funds and other accounts managed for organizations and individuals), the Adviser may be limited by the client with respect to the selection of brokers or may be instructed to direct trades through a particular broker. In these cases, the Adviser may place separate, non-simultaneous transactions for the Fund and another account which may temporarily affect the market price of the security or the execution of the transaction, or both, to the detriment of the Fund or the other account.
- Finally, the appearance of a conflict of interest may arise if the Adviser has an incentive, such as a performance-based management fee, which relates to the management of one fund or account but not all funds and accounts with respect to which a portfolio manager has day-to-day management responsibilities.

The Adviser has adopted certain compliance procedures, which are designed to address these types of conflicts. The Adviser has developed and implemented policies and procedures designed to ensure that all clients are treated equitably. In addition, compliance oversight and monitoring ensures adherence to policies designed to avoid conflicts. The Adviser's policies and procedures address trade aggregation and allocation. Typically when aggregating trades in the fund and/or other accounts, the size of the trade for the fund and/or other account is determined by proportional size of the fund and/or other account. Moreover, in aggregated trades the fund and/or other account receives the average share price and transaction costs are shared on a pro-rata basis. Additionally, given the nature of the Adviser's investment process and its Fund and/or other accounts, the Adviser's investment management team services are typically applied collectively to the management of the Fund and/or other accounts following the same strategy.

Compensation of the Adviser's portfolio management team is not based upon performance of the Fund managed by the Adviser. Fund performance is not a factor in compensation as it might encourage investment decisions deviating from the Fund's mandate. To mitigate the potential for conflict to have a team member favor one Fund over another Fund and/or other account, the Adviser has established procedures, including policies to monitor trading and best execution for all funds and/or other accounts.

There is no guarantee that such procedures will detect each and every situation in which a conflict arises.

**Information Concerning Compensation of Portfolio Manager.** The portfolio manager receives a combination of base compensation and discretionary compensation, comprised of a cash bonus and a deferred compensation program described below. The methodology used to determine the portfolio manager's compensation is applied across all accounts managed by the portfolio manager.

**Base salary compensation.** Generally, the portfolio manager receives a base salary compensation based on the level of their position with the Adviser.

**Discretionary compensation.** In addition to base compensation, the portfolio manager may receive discretionary compensation. Discretionary compensation can include the following:

- Cash bonus;
- Long-Term Incentive Plan: Deferred compensation and retirement plan.

Several factors determine discretionary compensation, which can vary by portfolio management team and circumstances. A portfolio manager's total compensation is determined through a subjective process that evaluates numerous qualitative and quantitative factors. Not all factors will be applicable to each portfolio manager and there is no particular weighting or formula for considering the factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Risk weighted investment performance of the accounts managed by the portfolio manager.
- Net income (revenue minus expenses) generated by the accounts managed by the portfolio manager.
- The dollar amount of assets managed by the portfolio manager.
- Perceived long-term business potential to the Adviser of the accounts managed by the portfolio manager.
- Contribution to other business objectives of the Adviser.
- Market compensation survey research by independent third parties.
- Other qualitative factors, such as contribution to client objectives.
- Overall performance of the Advisor and the portfolio management team.

**Additional Information Regarding Compensation of Mr. Merk.** As the sole owner of the Adviser, compensation to Mr. Merk for his services to the Fund will be allocated out of the Adviser's income, which is net revenue minus the Adviser's expenses. Mr. Merk will not receive a performance fee for his services to the Fund. Mr. Merk currently does not advise other advisory client accounts and, as a result, does not receive compensation for other advisory services.

**Portfolio Manager Ownership in the Fund.** The Adviser has provided the following information regarding the portfolio manager's ownership in the Fund:

<b>Portfolio Manager</b>	<b>Dollar Range of Beneficial Ownership in the Fund as of March 31, 2022</b>
Axel Merk	\$100,001 - \$500,000

**Fees.** The Adviser receives an advisory fee from the Fund at an annual rate equal to 1.00% of the Fund's average annual daily net assets under the terms of the Advisory Agreement. The Adviser may, but is not obligated to, voluntarily waive fees and/or assume operating expenses. The Adviser will waive its advisory fee for any Fund assets in pooled investment vehicles sponsored by it.

The advisory fee, if not waived, is accrued daily and paid monthly by the Fund and is assessed based on the daily net assets of the Fund. In addition to receiving its advisory fee from the Fund, the Adviser may also act and be compensated as an investment manager for its clients with respect to assets that such clients have invested in the Fund. If you have a separately

managed account with the Adviser with assets invested in the Fund, the Adviser will not assess or receive any management fee on the portion of the separately managed account invested in the Fund.

Table 1 in Appendix B shows the dollar amount of advisory fees accrued by the Fund, the amount of advisory fees waived and/or expenses reimbursed by the Adviser, if any, and the actual advisory fees retained by the Adviser. The data provided is for the last three fiscal years.

**Advisory Agreement.** The Fund's Advisory Agreement remains in effect for an initial period of two years from the date of its effectiveness, and thereafter the Advisory Agreement must be approved at least annually by the Board or by majority vote of the shareholders, and in either case by a majority of the Trustees who are not parties to the Advisory Agreement or interested persons of any such party (other than as Trustees of the Trust).

Pursuant to the Advisory Agreement for the Fund, the Adviser pays all expenses of the Fund with the exception of the following: any Rule 12b-1 expenses that a Fund is authorized to pay, transfer agency basis points fee, borrowing costs including interest and dividend expenses on securities sold short, taxes, brokerage fees and commissions as well as extraordinary and non-recurring expenses. The actual advisory fee rate paid by the Merk Hard Currency Fund to the Adviser for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022 was 1.00% due to the Adviser's waiver of any fees that accrued from the Fund's investments in the Merk Gold Trust, an ETP sponsored by the Adviser.

The Advisory Agreement is terminable without penalty by the Trust with respect to the Fund on 60 days' written notice when authorized either by vote of the Fund's shareholders or by a majority vote of the Board, or by the Adviser on 60 days' written notice to the Trust. The Advisory Agreement terminates immediately upon assignment.

Under the Advisory Agreement, the Adviser is not liable for any error of judgment, mistake of law, or in any event whatsoever except for willful misfeasance, bad faith, or gross negligence in the performance of its duties or by reason of reckless disregard of its obligations and duties under the Advisory Agreement.

The Adviser is not affiliated with Apex or any company affiliated with Apex.

## **G. Distributor**

**Distribution Services.** Foreside Fund Services, LLC (the "Distributor") is the distributor (also known as principal underwriter) of the shares of the Fund and is located at Three Canal Plaza, Suite 100, Portland, Maine 04101. The Distributor is a registered broker-dealer and is a member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. ("FINRA"). The Distributor is not affiliated with the Adviser or any other service provider for the Trust.

Under a Distribution Agreement with the Trust, the Distributor acts as the agent of the Trust in connection with the continuous offering of shares of the Fund. The Distributor continually distributes shares of the Fund on a best efforts basis. The Distributor has no obligation to sell any specific quantity of Fund shares. The Distributor and its officers have no role in determining the investment policies or which securities are to be purchased or sold by the Trust.

The Distributor may enter into agreements with selected broker-dealers, banks or other financial intermediaries for distribution of shares of the Fund. With respect to certain financial intermediaries and related fund "supermarket" platform arrangements, the Fund and/or the Adviser, rather than the Distributor, typically enters into such agreements. These financial intermediaries may charge a fee for their services and may receive shareholder service or other fees from parties other than the Distributor. These financial intermediaries may otherwise act as processing agents and are responsible for promptly transmitting purchase, redemption and other requests to the Fund.

Investors who purchase shares through financial intermediaries will be subject to the procedures of those intermediaries through which they purchase shares, which may include charges, investment minimums, cutoff times and other restrictions in addition to, or different from, those listed herein. Information concerning any charges or services will be provided to investors by the financial intermediary through which they purchase shares. Investors purchasing shares of the Fund through financial intermediaries should acquaint themselves with their financial intermediary's procedures and should read the Prospectus in conjunction with any materials and information provided by their financial intermediary. The financial intermediary, and not the investors, will be the shareholder of record, although investors may have the right to vote shares depending upon their arrangement with the intermediary. The Distributor does not receive compensation from the Fund for its distribution services except the distribution/service fees with respect to the shares of those classes for which a Rule 12b-1 plan is effective, as applicable. The Adviser pays the Distributor a fee for certain distribution-related services.

**Distribution Plan (Investor Shares).** The Trust, including a majority of Independent Trustees who have no direct or indirect financial interest in the operation of the Rule 12b-1 plan, has adopted a Rule 12b-1 plan under which the Fund is authorized to pay to the Distributor and any other entity authorized by the Board, including the Adviser (collectively, “payees”), a fee equal to 0.25% of the average daily net assets of the Fund's Investor Shares for distribution services and/or the servicing of shareholder accounts. The payees may pay any or all amounts received under the Rule 12b-1 plan to other persons for any distribution or service activity conducted on behalf of the Fund. The Rule 12b-1 plan is a core component of the ongoing distribution of the Fund's Investor Shares, which is intended to attract and retain assets from prospective investors and may realize potential economies of scale for shareholders in the form of future lower expense ratios. Pursuant to an agreement between the Distributor and the Adviser, the Distributor may reimburse certain distribution-related and/or shareholder servicing expenses incurred by the Adviser.

The payees may pay any or all amounts received under the Rule 12b-1 plan to other persons for any distribution or service activity conducted on behalf of the Fund. The Rule 12b-1 plan is a core component of the ongoing distribution of the Fund's Investor Shares, which is intended to attract and retain assets from prospective investors and may realize potential economies of scale for shareholders in the form of future lower expense ratios.

The Rule 12b-1 plan provides that the payees may incur expenses for distribution and service activities including, but not limited to (1) any sales, marketing and other activities primarily intended to result in the sale of Fund shares and (2) providing services to holders of shares related to their investment in the Fund, including, without limitation, providing assistance in connection with responding to shareholder inquiries regarding the Fund’s investment objective, policies and other operational features and inquiries regarding shareholder accounts. Expenses for such activities include compensation to employees and expenses, including overhead and telephone and other communication expenses, of a payee who engages in or supports the distribution of Fund shares or who provides shareholder servicing, such as responding to shareholder inquiries regarding the Fund's operations; the incremental costs of printing (excluding typesetting) and distributing prospectuses, statements of additional information, annual reports and other periodic reports for use in connection with the offering or sale of Fund shares to any prospective investors; and the costs of preparing, printing and distributing sales literature and advertising materials used by the Distributor, the Adviser or others in connection with the offering of Fund shares for sale to the public.

The Rule 12b-1 plan requires the payees to prepare and submit to the Board, at least quarterly, and the Board to review, written reports setting forth all amounts expended under the Rule 12b-1 plan and identifying the activities for which those expenditures were made. The Rule 12b-1 plan obligates the Fund to compensate payees for services and not to reimburse them for expenses incurred.

The following payments made by the Distributor under the Rule 12b-1 plan were used as set forth below during the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022.

<b>Advertising</b>	<b>Printing &amp; Mailing of Prospectuses</b>	<b>Compensation to Underwriters</b>	<b>Compensation to Broker-Dealers</b>	<b>Compensation to Sales Personnel</b>	<b>Interest, Carrying or Other Financial Charges</b>
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$92,626	\$0	\$0

As of March 31, 2022, the amount of unreimbursed expenses incurred under the Rule 12b-1 plan was \$27,741 for the Fund, representing less than 0.01% of the Fund’s net assets.

The Rule 12b-1 plan provides that it will remain in effect for one year from the date of its adoption and thereafter shall continue in effect provided it is approved at least annually by the shareholders or by the Board, including a majority of the Independent Trustees. The Rule 12b-1 plan further provides that it may not be amended to materially increase the costs that the Fund or class bears for distribution or shareholder servicing pursuant to the Rule 12b-1 plan without approval by affected shareholders and that other material amendments of the Rule 12b-1 plan must be approved by the Independent Trustees. The Rule 12b-1 plan may be terminated with respect to Investor Shares at any time by the Board, by a majority of the Independent Trustees or by the shareholders of Investor Shares. No Independent Trustee has any direct or indirect financial interest in the Rule 12b-1 Plan.

Table 2 in Appendix B shows the dollar amount of fees payable by the Fund to the Distributor or its agents under the Rule 12b-1 plan, the amount of fees waived by the Distributor or its agents and the actual fees received by the Distributor and its agents under the Rule 12b-1 plan. The data provided is for the last three fiscal years.

## H. Other Fund Service Providers

**Administrator, Fund Accountant, Transfer Agent, and Compliance Services.** Apex and its subsidiaries provide administration, compliance, fund accounting and transfer agency services to the Fund. Apex is a wholly owned subsidiary of Apex US Holdings LLC.

Pursuant to a Services Agreement (the “Services Agreement”) with Atlantic Fund Administration, LLC (d/b/a Apex Fund Services), the Fund pays Apex a bundled fee for administration, compliance, fund accounting and transfer agency services. The Fund also pays Apex certain surcharges and shareholder account fees. The fee is accrued daily by the Fund and is paid monthly based on the average net assets, transactions and positions for the prior month.

The Services Agreement continues in effect until terminated, so long as its continuance is specifically approved or ratified with such frequency and in such manner as required by applicable law. After an initial three-year term, the Services Agreement is terminable with or without cause and without penalty by the Trust or by Apex Fund Services on 120 days’ written notice to the other party. The Services Agreement is also terminable for cause by the non-breaching party on at least 60 days’ written notice to the other party, provided that such party has not cured the breach within that notice period. Under the Services Agreement, Apex is not liable to the Fund or the Fund’s shareholders for any act or omission, 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 under the Services Agreement. The Services Agreement also provides that Apex will not be liable to a shareholder for any loss incurred due to a NAV difference if such difference is less than or equal to 0.5% or less than or equal to \$25.00 per shareholder account, and in addition, limits the amount of any loss for which Apex Fund Services would be liable. Also, Apex Fund Services is not liable for the errors and omissions of others, including the entities that supply security prices to Apex Fund Services and the Fund. Losses incurred by the Fund as a result of acts or omissions by Apex Fund Services or any other service provider for which Apex Fund Services or the service provider is not liable to the Fund would be borne through the Fund, by its shareholders.

As Administrator, Apex administers the Fund’s operations except those that are the responsibility of any other service provider hired by the Trust, all in such manner and to such extent as may be authorized by the Board. The Administrator’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to: (1) overseeing the performance of administrative and professional services rendered to the Fund by others, including its custodian, transfer agent and dividend disbursing agent as well as legal, auditing, shareholder servicing and other services performed for the Fund; (2) preparing for filing and filing certain regulatory filings (*i.e.*, registration statements and shareholder reports) subject to Trust counsel and/or independent auditor oversight; (3) overseeing the preparation and filing of the Fund’s tax returns, the preparation of financial statements and related reports to the Fund’s shareholders, the SEC and state and other securities administrators; (4) providing the Fund with adequate general office space and facilities and providing persons suitable to the Board to serve as officers of the Trust; (5) assisting the Adviser in monitoring Fund holdings for compliance with prospectus investment restrictions and assisting in preparation of periodic compliance reports; and (6) with the cooperation of the Adviser, the officers of the Trust and other relevant parties, preparing and disseminating materials for meetings of the Board.

Apex provides a Principal Executive Officer, a Principal Financial Officer, a CCO, and an Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer to the Fund, as well as certain additional compliance support functions.

Atlantic Shareholder Services, LLC, 3 Canal Plaza, Portland, Maine 04101 (the “Transfer Agent”), a wholly owned subsidiary of Apex US Holdings LLC (d/b/a Apex Fund Services), serves as transfer agent and distribution paying agent for the Fund. The Transfer Agent is registered as a transfer agent with the SEC. The Transfer Agent maintains an account for each shareholder of record of the Fund and is responsible for processing purchase and redemption requests and paying distributions to shareholders of record.

As Fund accountant, Apex provides fund accounting services to the Fund. These services include calculating the NAV of the Fund class.

Table 3 in Appendix B shows the dollar amount of the fees accrued by the Fund for administration services, the amount of fees waived by Apex, if any, and the actual fees retained by Apex under the Services Agreement. The data provided is for the last three fiscal years.

**Custodian.** The Bank of New York Mellon (the “Custodian”) is the custodian for the Fund. The Custodian safeguards and controls the Fund's cash and securities, determines income and collects interest on Fund investments. The Custodian may employ subcustodians to provide custody of the Fund's domestic and foreign assets. The Custodian also maintains certain books and records of the Fund that are required by applicable federal regulations. The Custodian is located at One Wall Street, New York City, New York 10286.

**Legal Counsel.** K&L Gates LLP, 1601 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, serves as legal counsel to the Trust.

**Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm.** BBD, LLP (“BBD”), 1835 Market Street, 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103, is the independent registered public accounting firm for the Fund, providing audit and tax services. BBD audits the annual financial statements of the Fund and provides the Fund with an audit opinion. BBD also reviews certain regulatory filings of the Fund.

## PORTFOLIO TRANSACTIONS

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### A. How Securities are Purchased and Sold

Purchases and sales of portfolio securities that are fixed-income securities (for instance, money market instruments and bonds, notes and bills) usually are principal transactions. In a principal transaction, the party from which the Fund purchases or to which the Fund sells is acting on its own behalf (and not as the agent of some other party such as its customers). These securities normally are purchased directly from the issuer or from an underwriter or market maker for the securities. There usually are no brokerage commissions paid for these securities.

Purchases and sales of portfolio securities that are equity securities (for instance, common stock and preferred stock) are generally effected if (1) the security is traded on an exchange, through brokers that charge commissions and (2) the security is traded in the over-the-counter markets, in a principal transaction directly from a market maker. In transactions on stock exchanges, commissions are negotiated.

When transactions are executed in an over-the-counter market, the Adviser will seek to deal with the primary market makers, but when necessary in order to obtain best execution, the Adviser will utilize the services of others.

The price of securities purchased from underwriters includes a disclosed fixed commission or concession paid by the issuer to the underwriter, and prices of securities purchased from dealers serving as market makers reflect the spread between the bid and asked price.

In the case of fixed-income and equity securities traded in the over-the-counter markets, there is generally no stated commission, but the price usually includes an undisclosed commission, markup or markdown.

### B. Commissions Paid

Table 4 in Appendix B shows the dollar amount of the aggregate brokerage commissions paid by the Fund; the amount of commissions paid to an affiliate of the Fund, the Adviser or the Distributor; the percentage of brokerage commissions paid to an affiliate of the Fund, the Adviser or the Distributor; and the percentage of transactions executed by an affiliate of the Fund, the Adviser or the Distributor. The data provided is for the last three fiscal years.

### C. Adviser Responsibility for Purchases and Sales and Choosing Broker-Dealers

The Adviser places orders for the purchase and sale of securities with broker-dealers selected by and at the discretion of the Adviser. The Fund does not have any obligation to deal with a specific broker or dealer in the execution of portfolio transactions. Allocations of transactions to brokers and dealers and the frequency of transactions are determined by the Adviser in its best judgment and in a manner deemed to be in the best interest of the Fund rather than by any formula.

The Adviser seeks “best execution” for all portfolio transactions. This means that the Adviser seeks the most favorable price and execution available. The Fund may not always pay the lowest commission or spread available. Rather, in determining the amount of commissions (including certain dealer spreads) paid in connection with securities transactions, the Adviser takes into account factors such as the size of the order, the difficulty of execution, the efficiency of the executing broker’s facilities (including the research services described below) and any risk assumed by the executing broker-dealer. The Fund may pay a higher commission if, for example, the broker-dealer has specific expertise in a particular type of transaction (due to factors such as size or difficulty) or is highly efficient in trade execution.

The Adviser may also give consideration to brokerage and research services furnished to the Adviser by broker-dealers and may cause the Fund to pay these broker-dealers a higher commission or spread than may be charged by other broker-dealers. Research services may include reports that are common in the industry, such as research reports and periodicals, quotation systems, software for portfolio management and formal databases. Typically, the Adviser uses the research to manage all client accounts. Therefore, the commission dollars spent for research generally benefit all of the Adviser’s clients and the Fund’s investors, although a particular client may not benefit from research received on each occasion. The Adviser does not reduce its fees because the Adviser receives research.

Table 5 in Appendix B lists the Fund’s directed brokerage in return for research services, the amount of transactions so directed, and the amount of commissions earned by the broker-dealer during the past fiscal year.

#### **D. Counterparty Risk**

The Adviser monitors the creditworthiness of counterparties to the Fund's transactions and intends to enter into a transaction only when it believes that the counterparty presents appropriate credit risks.

#### **E. Transactions through Affiliates**

The Adviser may effect brokerage transactions through affiliates of the Adviser (or affiliates of those persons) pursuant to procedures adopted by the Trust and in accordance with applicable law.

#### **F. Other Accounts of the Adviser**

Investment decisions for the Fund are made independently from those for any other account or investment company that is or may in the future become advised by the Adviser or its affiliates. Investment decisions are the product of many factors, including basic suitability for the particular client involved. Likewise, a particular security may be bought or sold for certain clients even though it could have been bought or sold for other clients at the same time. In some instances, with any required consent, one client may sell a particular security to another client. In addition, two or more clients may simultaneously purchase or sell the same security, in which event each day's transactions in such security are, insofar as is possible, averaged as to price and allocated between such clients in a manner which, in the Adviser's opinion, is in the best interest of the affected accounts and is equitable to each and in accordance with the amount being purchased or sold by each. There may be circumstances when purchases or sales of a portfolio security for one client could have an adverse effect on another client that has a position in that security. In addition, when purchases or sales of the same security for the Fund and other client accounts managed by the Adviser occur contemporaneously, the purchase or sale orders may be aggregated in order to obtain any price advantages available to large denomination purchases or sales.

#### **G. Portfolio Turnover**

The frequency of portfolio transactions of the Fund (the portfolio turnover rate) will vary from year to year depending on many factors. From time to time, a Fund may engage in active short-term trading to take advantage of price movements affecting individual issues, groups of issues or markets. Higher portfolio turnover rates may result in increased brokerage costs to the Fund and a possible increase in short-term capital gains (taxable to shareholders as ordinary income when distributed to them) or losses. An annual portfolio turnover rate of 100% would occur if all the securities in the Fund were replaced once in a period of one year.

Portfolio turnover rate is defined under the rules of the SEC as the value of the securities purchased or securities sold, excluding all securities whose maturities at time of acquisition were one year or less, divided by the average monthly value of such securities owned during the year. Based on this definition, instruments with remaining maturities of less than one year, including options and futures contracts in which the Fund invests, are excluded from the calculation of portfolio turnover rate. The portfolio turnover rate is calculated without regard to any securities whose maturities or expiration dates at the time of acquisition were one year or less.

#### **H. Securities of Regular Broker-Dealers**

From time to time the Fund may acquire and hold securities issued by its "regular brokers and dealers" or the parents of those brokers and dealers. For this purpose, regular brokers and dealers are the ten brokers or dealers that: (1) received the greatest amount of brokerage commissions during the Fund's last fiscal year; (2) engaged in the largest amount of principal transactions for portfolio transactions of the Fund during the Fund's last fiscal year; or (3) sold the largest amount of the Fund's shares during the Fund's last fiscal year.

Table 6 in Appendix B lists the regular brokers and dealers of the Fund whose securities (or the securities of the parent company) were acquired during the past fiscal year and the aggregate value of the Fund's holdings of those securities as of the Fund's most recent fiscal year ended March 31, 2022.

#### **I. Portfolio Holdings**

Portfolio holdings as of the end of the Fund's annual and semi-annual fiscal periods are reported to the SEC on Form N-CSR within 10 days of the mailing of the annual or semi-annual report (typically no later than 70 days after the end of each period). Monthly portfolio disclosures will be filed with the SEC on Form N-PORT no later than 60 days after the end of each fiscal quarter. The monthly holdings reports on Form N-PORT for the first and second months of the fiscal quarter will

remain non-public and the monthly holdings report for the third month of the fiscal quarter will become publicly available upon filing (with the exception of certain items). You may request a copy of the Fund's latest annual or semi-annual report to shareholders or a copy of the Fund's latest Form N-PORT, when it is available, which contains the Fund's portfolio holdings, by contacting the Transfer Agent at the address or phone number listed on the cover of this SAI. You may also obtain a copy of the Fund's latest Form N-CSR and Form N-PORT by accessing the SEC's website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

In addition, the Adviser may make publicly available, on a monthly basis, information regarding the Fund's holdings. This holdings information may also be made available through the Adviser's website and may be released within 15 days of the month end. The Adviser may, subject to its policies on communications with the press and other media, discuss portfolio information in interviews with members of the media.

The Fund's nonpublic portfolio holdings information is received by certain service providers in advance of public release in the course of performing or enabling them to perform the contractual or fiduciary duties necessary for the Fund's operations that the Fund has retained them to perform so long as the disclosure is subject to duties of confidentiality imposed by law and/or contract as determined by the Fund's officers and, if applicable, the Board. The Fund's portfolio holdings are available in real-time on a daily basis to the Adviser, the Administrator and the Custodian. In addition, the Distributor, the independent auditors, proxy voting services, mailing services, and financial printers and ratings or ranking organizations may have access, but not on a daily real-time basis, to the Fund's nonpublic portfolio holdings information on an ongoing basis. The Trustees, Trust's officers, legal counsel to the Trust and to the Independent Trustees, and the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm may receive such information on an as needed basis.

From time to time, nonpublic information regarding the Fund's portfolio holdings may also be disclosed to certain mutual fund consultants, analysts, or other entities or persons ("Recipients") that have a legitimate business purpose in receiving such information. Any disclosure of information more current than the latest publicly available portfolio holdings information will be made only if a Trust officer determines that: (1) the more current information is necessary for a Recipient to complete a specified task; (2) the Fund has legitimate business purposes for disclosing the information; and (3) the disclosure is in the best interests of the Fund and its shareholders. Any Recipient receiving such information shall agree in writing to: (1) keep the information confidential; (2) use it only for agreed-upon purposes; and (3) not trade or advise others to trade securities, including shares of the Fund, on the basis of the information. Such confidentiality agreements entered into for the receipt of nonpublic information shall also provide, among other things, that the Recipient: (1) will limit access to the information to its employees and agents who are obligated to keep and treat such information as confidential; (2) will assume responsibility for any breach of the terms of the confidentiality agreement by its employees; and (3) upon request from the Trust, will return or promptly destroy the information. Any Recipient that is a ratings or ranking organization receiving such information must have in place control mechanisms to reasonably ensure or otherwise agree that: (1) the holdings information will be kept confidential; (2) no employee shall use the information to effect trading or for their personal benefit; and (3) the nature and type of information that any employee, in turn, may disclose to third-parties is limited. The Trust officer shall report to the Board at its next regularly scheduled Board meeting the entering into of an agreement with a Recipient for the disclosure of nonpublic portfolio holdings information and shall include in the report the Trust officer's reasons for determining to permit such disclosure.

The Adviser may provide investment management for accounts of clients other than the Fund, which may result in some of those accounts having a composition substantially similar to that of the Fund. The Adviser and its affiliates may provide regular information to clients and others regarding the holdings in accounts that each manages, but no information is provided to clients or others that identifies the actual composition of the Fund's holdings, specifies the amount of the Fund's assets invested in a security or specifies the extent of any such similarities among accounts managed by the Adviser.

No compensation is received by the Fund, or, to the Fund's knowledge, paid to the Adviser or any other party in connection with the disclosure of the Fund's portfolio holdings. The codes of ethics of the Trust and the Adviser are intended to address, among other things, potential conflicts of interest arising from the misuse of information concerning the Fund's portfolio holdings. In addition, the Fund's service providers may be subject to confidentiality provisions contained within their service agreements, codes of ethics, professional codes, or other similar policies that address conflicts of interest arising from the misuse of such information.

The Adviser, Administrator and Distributor must inform a Trust officer if it identifies any conflict between the interests of shareholders and those of another party resulting from the disclosure of nonpublic portfolio holdings information. Such conflicts will be reported to the Board for appropriate action at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

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

## PURCHASE AND REDEMPTION INFORMATION

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### A. General Information

You may effect purchases or redemptions or request any shareholder privilege by contacting the Transfer Agent.

The Fund accepts orders for the purchase or redemption of shares of the Fund on any weekday except days when the New York Stock Exchange (the “NYSE”) is closed. Under unusual circumstances, the Fund may accept orders when the NYSE is closed if deemed appropriate by the Trust’s officers.

The shares of the Fund may not be available for sale in the state in which you reside. Please check with your investment professional to determine the Fund’s availability.

### B. Additional Purchase Information

Shares of the Fund are offered on a continuous basis by the Distributor.

The Fund reserves the right to refuse any purchase request.

Fund shares are normally issued for cash only. In its discretion, the Fund may accept portfolio securities that meet the investment objective and policies of the Fund as payment for Fund shares. The Fund may allow an in kind purchase provided that, among other things: (i) the purchase will not dilute the interests of its shareholders; (ii) the assets accepted by the Fund consist of securities that are appropriate, in type and amount, for investment by the Fund in light of its investment objective and policies and current holdings; (iii) market quotations are readily available for the securities; (iv) in determining the value of the assets contributed and the corresponding amount of shares issued, the Trust’s Valuation Policy will be applied; (v) the transaction must comply with the Trust’s Affiliated Persons and Transactions Policy if the person investing is an affiliated person; and (vi) the Adviser to the Fund discloses to the Board the existence of, and all material facts relating to, any conflicts of interest between the Adviser and the Fund in the proposed in-kind purchase.

**IRAs.** All contributions into an individual retirement account (an “IRA”) through the automatic investing service are treated as IRA contributions made during the year that the contribution is received.

**UGMAs/UTMAs.** If the custodian’s name is not in the account registration of a gift or transfer to minor (“UGMA/UTMA”) account, the custodian must provide instructions in a manner indicating custodial capacity.

### C. Additional Redemption Information

You may redeem Fund shares at NAV.

The Fund may reverse a transaction for the purchase of Fund shares within two business days of notification from your bank that your funds did not clear (1) to collect any charge relating to transactions effected for the benefit of a shareholder that is applicable to the Fund’s shares as provided in the Prospectus or (2) to recoup any actual losses incurred by the Fund or the Transfer Agent in connection with any reversed transaction.

**Suspension of Right of Redemption.** The right of redemption may not be suspended for more than seven days after the tender of Fund shares, except for any period during which: (1) the NYSE is closed (other than customary weekend and holiday closings) or during which the SEC determines that trading thereon is restricted; (2) an emergency (as determined by the SEC) exists as a result of which disposal by the Fund of its securities is not reasonably practicable or as a result of which it is not reasonably practicable for the Fund fairly to determine the value of its net assets; or (3) the SEC has entered a suspension order for the protection of the shareholders of the Fund.

**Redemption in Kind.** Redemption proceeds normally are paid in cash. The Trust has filed an election with the SEC, however, pursuant to which the Fund may effect a redemption in portfolio securities at the shareholder’s request or if the shareholder is redeeming more than \$250,000 or 1% of the Fund’s total net assets, whichever is less, during any 90-day period. To the extent the Fund satisfies a redemption request by distributing portfolio securities, it will do so pursuant to procedures adopted by the Board. If the Fund pays redemption proceeds in kind, the redeeming shareholder may incur transaction costs to dispose of the securities and may receive less for them than the price at which they were valued for purposes of redemption. In addition, if the Fund redeems shares in this manner, the shareholder assumes the risk of a subsequent change in the market value of those securities, the costs of liquidating the securities (such as brokerage costs)

and the possibility of a lack of a liquid market for those securities. In-kind redemptions may take the form of a pro rata portion of the Fund's portfolio, individual securities, or a representative basket of securities.

**NAV Determination.** The offering price for Fund shares is at their current NAV. In determining the NAV of the Fund class, securities for which market quotations are readily available are valued at current market value using the last reported sales price or the official closing price from the primary exchange where the security is listed, as provided by an independent pricing service or, if no sales price is reported, the mean of the last bid and ask prices. If market quotations are not readily available or the Fund reasonably believes that they are unreliable, then securities are valued at fair value as determined by the Board (or its delegate). For further information, see the "General Information" section in the Prospectus.

**Distributions.** Distributions of net investment income will be reinvested at the NAV of the applicable class (unless you elect to receive distributions in cash) as of the last day of the period with respect to which the distribution is paid. Distributions of net realized capital gains will be reinvested at the NAV of the applicable class (unless you elect to receive distributions in cash) on the payment date for the distribution. Cash payments may be made more than seven days following the date on which distributions would otherwise be reinvested.

## TAXATION

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The tax information set forth in the Prospectus and in this section relates solely to federal tax law and assumes that the Fund qualifies for treatment as a RIC (as discussed below). This information is only a summary of certain key federal income tax considerations affecting the Fund and its shareholders and is in addition to the tax information provided in the Prospectus. No attempt has been made to present a complete explanation of the federal tax treatment of the Fund or the tax implications to shareholders. The discussions here and in the Prospectus are not intended as substitutes for careful tax planning.

This “Taxation” section is based on the IRC, the regulations thereunder, IRS interpretations and similar authority on which the Fund may rely, all as in effect on the date hereof, as well as on court decisions publicly available through that date. Future legislative, regulatory, or administrative changes or court decisions may significantly change the tax rules applicable to the Fund and its shareholders. Any of these changes or court decisions may have a retroactive effect.

*Each investor should consult his or her own tax advisor as to the federal, state, local, and foreign tax provisions applicable to the investor.*

### A. Qualification for Treatment as a Regulated Investment Company

The Fund intends, for each taxable year, to continue to qualify for treatment as a RIC. This qualification does not involve governmental supervision of management or investment practices or policies of the Fund.

The taxable year-end of the Fund is March 31, which is the same as its fiscal year-end.

**Consequences of Qualification.** As a RIC, the Fund will not be subject to federal income tax on the portion of its investment company taxable income (generally, interest, dividends, other ordinary income, the excess of net short-term capital gain over net long-term capital loss, and net gains and losses from certain foreign currency transactions, net of expenses, all determined without regard to any deduction for dividends paid) and net capital gain (that is, the excess of net long-term capital gain over net short-term capital loss) that it distributes to its shareholders. To qualify to be taxed as a RIC for a taxable year, the Fund must satisfy the following requirements, among others:

- The Fund must distribute at least the sum of 90% of its investment company taxable income plus 90% of its net interest income excludable from gross income under IRC Section 103(a) for the taxable year (“Distribution Requirement”). Certain distributions made by the Fund after the close of its taxable year are considered distributions attributable to that taxable year for purposes of satisfying this requirement.
- The Fund must derive at least 90% of its gross income for the taxable year from (1) dividends, interest, payments with respect to securities loans, and gains from the sale or other disposition of securities or foreign currencies, or other income (including gains from options, futures or forward contracts) derived from its business of investing in securities or those currencies and (2) net income from an interest in a “qualified publicly traded partnership” (“QPTP”) (income described in (1) and (2), collectively “Qualifying Income”) (“Gross Income Requirement”). A QPTP is defined as a “publicly traded partnership” (generally, a partnership the interests in which are “traded on an established securities market” or are “readily tradable on a secondary market (or the substantial equivalent thereof)”) that derives less than 90% of its gross income from sources described in clause (1).
- The Fund must satisfy the following asset diversification requirements (“Diversification Requirements”) at the close of each quarter of its taxable year: (1) at least 50% of the value of its total assets must consist of cash and cash items, Government securities, securities of other RICs, and securities of other issuers, with these other securities limited, in respect of any one issuer, to an amount that does not exceed 5% of the value of the Fund’s total assets and that does not represent more than 10% of the issuer’s outstanding voting securities (equity securities of a QPTP being considered voting securities for these purposes); and (2) no more than 25% of the value of its total assets may be invested in (a) the securities of any one issuer (other than Government securities and securities of other RICs), (b) the securities (other than securities of other RICs) of two or more issuers that the Fund controls (by owning 20% or more of their voting power) and that are engaged in the same, similar, or related trades or businesses, or (c) the securities of one or more QPTPs.

**Failure to Qualify.** If for any taxable year the Fund does not qualify for treatment as a RIC, either (1) by failing to satisfy the Distribution Requirement, even if it satisfied the Gross Income Requirement and the Diversification Requirements, or (2) by failing to satisfy the Gross Income Requirement and/or either Diversification Requirement and being unable, or determining

not, to cure the failure in the manner described in the next two paragraphs, then for federal income tax purposes all of its taxable income (including its net capital gain) would be subject to tax at regular corporate rates without any deduction for dividends paid to its shareholders. In addition, for those purposes the dividends would be taxable to the shareholders as ordinary income to the extent of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits, except that, for (a) individual and certain other non-corporate shareholders (each, an "individual shareholder"), the part thereof that is "qualified dividend income" would be subject to federal income tax at the rates for net capital gain, which are a maximum of 15% for a non-corporate shareholder with taxable income not exceeding certain thresholds (which will be adjusted for inflation annually) and 20% for non-corporate shareholders with taxable income exceeding such thresholds, and (b) those dividends would be eligible for the dividends-received deduction available to corporations under certain circumstances. Furthermore, the Fund could be required to recognize unrealized gains, pay substantial taxes and interest, and make substantial distributions before requalifying for RIC treatment.

If the Fund fails to satisfy the Gross Income Requirement for any taxable year, it nevertheless will be considered to have satisfied that requirement for that year if, among other things, the failure "is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect" and the Fund pays a tax in an amount equal to the excess of its gross income that is not Qualifying Income over one-ninth of its gross income that is Qualifying Income.

If the Fund satisfies both Diversification Requirements at the close of its first quarter of its first taxable year, but fails to satisfy either Diversification Requirement at the close of any subsequent taxable year quarter by reason of a discrepancy existing immediately after its acquisition of any security that is wholly or partly the result of that acquisition during that quarter, it will not lose its status for that quarter as a RIC if the discrepancy is eliminated within 30 days after the quarter's close. If the Fund fails to satisfy either or both Diversification Requirement(s) (other than a *de minimis* failure, as described in the IRC) for a quarter and the preceding sentence does not apply, it nevertheless will be considered to have satisfied those requirements for that quarter if, among other things, the failure "is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect" and the Fund disposes of the assets that caused the failure within six months after the last day of the quarter in which it identifies the failure in the manner prescribed by the IRS. In that case, the Fund will also be liable for a federal tax equal to the greater of \$50,000 or the amount determined by multiplying the net income generated by those assets for the period from the date the failure occurs to the date of disposition thereof by the highest rate of federal income tax applicable to corporations (currently 21%).

Failure to qualify for treatment as a RIC would thus have a negative impact on the Fund's after-tax performance. It is possible that the Fund will not qualify as a RIC in any given taxable year.

## **B. Fund Distributions**

The Fund anticipates distributing substantially all of its investment company taxable income for each taxable year. These distributions will be taxable to a shareholder as ordinary income, but, as described in the Prospectus, a portion of the distributions may be treated as "qualified dividend income" and thus eligible to be taxed to individual shareholders at the lower maximum federal income tax rates applicable to net capital gain.

The Fund anticipates distributing substantially all of its net capital gain (after reduction for any capital loss carryovers, *i.e.*, unutilized realized net capital losses from prior taxable years) for each taxable year. These distributions generally will be made only once a year, usually in December, but the Fund may make a limited number of additional distributions of net capital gain at any time during the year. These distributions will be taxable to a shareholder as long-term capital gains, regardless of how long the shareholder has held his or her shares. These distributions will not qualify for the dividends-received deduction or as "qualified dividend income."

A distribution by the Fund that does not constitute an ordinary income dividend or capital or foreign currency gain distribution will be treated as a non-taxable "return of capital." A return of capital distribution will reduce a shareholder's tax basis in Fund shares and will be treated as gain from the sale of the shares to the extent it exceeds the shareholder's basis.

Non-U.S. investors not engaged in a U.S. trade or business with which their investment in the Fund is "effectively connected" will be subject to U.S. federal income tax treatment that is different from that described above. Such non-U.S. investors may be subject to withholding tax at the rate of 30% (or a lower rate under an applicable tax treaty) on amounts treated as ordinary dividends from the Fund. Capital gain distributions, if any, are not subject to the 30% withholding tax. Exemption from this withholding tax is also provided for dividends properly reported in writing by the Fund to its shareholders as "interest-related dividends" or as "short-term capital gain dividends" paid by the Fund with respect to its "qualified net interest income" or "qualified short-term gain," respectively (all such terms as defined in the IRC). Non-U.S. investors will need to provide an effective IRS Form W-8BEN or other authorized withholding certificate to qualify for the exemption.

Each distribution by the Fund will be treated in the manner described above regardless of whether the distribution is paid in cash or reinvested in additional shares of the Fund (or of another fund). If a shareholder reinvests a distribution in additional shares, the shareholder will be treated as having received a distribution in an amount equal to the fair market value of the reinvested shares, determined as of the reinvestment date.

When a shareholder purchases shares of the Fund, the purchase price (NAV) will include any undistributed net investment income and realized net capital gains and foreign currency gains and any unrealized appreciation in the value of the assets of the Fund. A distribution of that income or gain (including net gain, if any, from realizing all or part of that appreciation) will be taxable to a shareholder in the manner described above, even if the distribution economically constitutes a partial return of invested capital to the shareholder.

Ordinarily, a shareholder is required to take taxable distributions by the Fund into income in the year in which they are made. A distribution declared in October, November, or December of any year and payable to shareholders of record on a specified date in one of those months, however, is deemed to be paid by the Fund and received by those shareholders on December 31 of that year if the distribution is paid in January of the following year.

The Fund will send information annually to its shareholders regarding the federal income tax status of distributions made (or deemed made) during the year.

### **C. Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (“FATCA”)**

Under FATCA, foreign financial institutions (“FFIs”) and non-financial foreign entities (“NFFEs”) that are Fund shareholders may be subject to a generally nonrefundable 30% withholding tax on income dividends the Fund pays. As discussed more fully below, the FATCA withholding tax generally may be avoided (a) by an FFI, if it reports certain information regarding direct and indirect ownership of financial accounts U.S. persons hold with the FFI, and (b) by an NFFE that certifies its status as such and, in certain circumstances, reports information regarding substantial U.S. owners.

An FFI may avoid FATCA withholding by becoming a “participating FFI,” which requires the FFI to enter into a tax compliance agreement with the IRS under the IRC. Under such an agreement, a participating FFI agrees to (1) verify and document whether it has U.S. accountholders, (2) report certain information regarding their accounts to the IRS, and (3) meet certain other specified requirements.

The U.S. Treasury Department has negotiated intergovernmental agreements (each, an “IGA”) with certain countries and is in various stages of negotiations with other foreign countries with respect to one or more alternative approaches to implement FATCA; entities in those countries may be required to comply with the terms of the relevant IGA instead of U.S. Treasury regulations. An FFI resident in a country that has entered into a Model I IGA with the United States must report to that country’s government (pursuant to the terms of the applicable IGA and applicable law), which will, in turn, report to the IRS. An FFI resident in a Model II IGA country generally must comply with U.S. regulatory requirements, with certain exceptions, including the treatment of recalcitrant accountholders. An FFI resident in one of those countries that complies with whichever of the foregoing applies will be exempt from FATCA withholding.

An NFFE that is the beneficial owner of a payment from the Fund may avoid FATCA withholding generally by certifying its status as such and, in certain circumstances, either that (1) it does not have any substantial U.S. owners or (2) it does have one or more such owners and reports the name, address, and taxpayer identification number of each such owner. The NFFE will report to the Fund or other applicable withholding agent, which may, in turn, report information to the IRS.

Those foreign shareholders also may fall into certain exempt, excepted, or deemed compliant categories established by U.S. Treasury regulations, IGAs, and other guidance regarding FATCA. An FFI or NFFE that invests in the Fund will need to provide the Fund with documentation properly certifying the entity’s status under FATCA to avoid FATCA withholding. The requirements imposed by FATCA are different from, and in addition to, the tax certification rules to avoid backup withholding described in the Prospectus. Foreign investors are urged to consult their tax advisors regarding the application of these requirements to their own situations and the impact thereof on their investment in the Fund.

### **D. Redemption of Shares**

In general, you will realize gain or loss on redemption of Fund shares in an amount equal to the difference between the proceeds of the redemption and your adjusted tax basis in the shares. All or a portion of any loss so realized will be disallowed if you purchase Fund shares (for example, by reinvesting distributions) within 30 days before or after the redemption (*i.e.*, a “wash” sale); if disallowed, the loss would be reflected in an upward adjustment to the basis in the

purchased shares. In general, any gain or allowed loss arising from an exchange or redemption of shares of the Fund will be considered a capital gain or loss and will be long-term capital gain or loss if the shares were held for longer than one year. Any capital loss arising from an exchange or redemption of shares held for six months or less, however, will be treated as a long-term capital loss to the extent of the amount of distributions of net capital gain, if any, received on such shares. In determining the holding period of shares for this purpose, any period during which your risk of loss is offset by means of an option, short sale, or similar transaction is not counted. Capital losses in any year are deductible only to the extent of capital gains plus, in the case of a non-corporate taxpayer, \$3,000 of ordinary income.

#### **E. Federal Excise Tax**

A 4% non-deductible federal excise tax (“Excise Tax”) is imposed on a RIC that fails to distribute in each calendar year an amount equal to at least the sum of (1) 98.0% of its ordinary income for the year plus (2) 98.2% of its capital gain net income for the one-year period ended on October 31 of the year plus (3) any ordinary income and capital gain net income for previous years that were not distributed during those years. The Fund will be treated as having distributed any amount on which it is subject to income tax for any taxable year ending in the calendar year.

For purposes of calculating the Excise Tax, the Fund (1) reduces its capital gain net income (but not below its net capital gain) by the amount of any net ordinary loss for the calendar year and (2) excludes foreign currency gains and losses realized or sustained after October 31 of any year in determining the amount of ordinary income for that calendar year and includes them in determining the amount of ordinary income for the succeeding calendar year.

The Fund intends to make sufficient distributions each year of its ordinary income and capital gain net income to avoid liability for the Excise Tax. The Fund may in certain circumstances be required to liquidate portfolio investments to make distributions sufficient to avoid that liability.

#### **F. Certain Tax Rules Applicable to Fund Transactions**

**Investments in Derivatives.** When a put or call option purchased by the Fund expires unexercised, the premium it paid gives rise to short-term or long-term capital loss at the time of expiration (depending on the length of the exercise period for the option). When a put or call option written by the Fund expires unexercised, the premium it received gives rise to short-term capital gain at the time of expiration. When the Fund exercises a call option, the basis in the underlying security is increased by the amount of the premium it paid for the option. When the Fund exercises a put option, the gain (or loss) from the sale of the underlying security is decreased (or increased) by the premium it paid for the option. When a put or call option written by the Fund is exercised, the purchase price (or the selling price in the case of a call) of the underlying security is decreased (or increased in the case of a call) for federal income tax purposes by the amount of the premium received.

Some futures contracts, foreign currency contracts, and “nonequity” options (*i.e.*, certain listed options, such as those on a “broad-based” securities index) in which a Fund invests – except any “securities futures contract” that is not a “dealer securities futures contract” (both as defined in the Code) and any interest rate swap, currency swap, basis swap, interest rate cap, interest rate floor, commodity swap, equity swap, equity index swap, credit default swap, or similar agreement - may be subject to IRC section 1256 (“Section 1256 contracts”). Any Section 1256 contracts the Fund holds at the end of its taxable year (and generally for purposes of the Excise Tax, on October 31 of each year) must be “marked to market” (that is, treated as having been sold at that time for their fair market value) for federal tax purposes, with the result that unrealized gains or losses will be treated as though they were realized. Sixty percent of any net gain or loss realized on these deemed sales, and 60% of any net realized gain or loss 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; however, certain foreign currency gains or losses arising from Section 1256 contracts will be treated as ordinary income or loss. These rules may operate to increase the amount that the Fund must distribute to satisfy the Distribution Requirement (*i.e.*, with respect to the portion treated as short-term capital gain, which will be includible in its investment company taxable income and thus taxable to its shareholders as ordinary income when distributed to them), and to increase the net capital gain the Fund recognizes, even though the Fund may not have closed the transactions and received cash to pay the distributions. The Fund may elect not to have the foregoing rules apply to any “mixed straddle” (that is, a straddle, which the Fund clearly identifies in accordance with applicable regulations, at least one (but not all) of the positions of which are Section 1256 contracts), although doing so may have the effect of increasing the relative proportion of short-term capital gain (distributions of which are taxable to its shareholders as ordinary income) and thus increasing the amount of dividends it must distribute.

Any option, futures contract, forward contract or other position entered into or held by the Fund in conjunction with any other position it holds 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 recognition of the Fund's gains and losses with respect to the straddle positions by requiring, among other things, that (1) any loss realized on disposition of one position of a straddle not be recognized to the extent that the Fund has unrealized gains with respect to the other positions in the straddle, (2) the Fund's holding period in straddle positions be suspended while the straddle exists (possibly resulting in a gain being treated as short-term rather than long-term capital gain), (3) the losses recognized with respect to certain straddle positions that are part of a mixed straddle and are non-Section 1256 contracts be treated as 60% long-term and 40% short-term capital loss, and (4) losses recognized with respect to certain straddle positions that would otherwise constitute short-term capital losses be treated as long-term capital losses. In addition, the deduction of interest and carrying charges attributable to certain straddle positions may be deferred. Various elections are available to the Fund, which may mitigate the effects of the straddle rules, particularly with respect to mixed straddles. In general, the foregoing rules do not apply to any straddles held by the Fund if all of the offsetting positions consist of Section 1256 contracts.

**Investments in Foreign Currencies and Securities.** Gains or losses attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates that occur between the time that the Fund accrues interest, dividends or other receivables or accrues expenses or other liabilities denominated in a foreign currency and the time that the Fund actually collects such receivables or pays such liabilities are treated as ordinary income or ordinary losses. Similarly, gains or losses from the disposition of a foreign currency, or from the disposition of a fixed-income security denominated in a foreign currency that are attributable to fluctuations in the value of the foreign currency between the date of acquisition of the asset and the date of its disposition, also are treated as ordinary income or ordinary losses. These gains or losses increase or decrease the amount of the Fund's investment company taxable income available to be distributed to its shareholders as ordinary income, rather than increasing or decreasing the amount of its net capital gain.

If the Fund owns shares in a foreign corporation that constitutes a "passive foreign investment company" for federal tax purposes (a "PFIC") and the Fund does not make either of the elections described in the next two paragraphs, it will be subject to federal income tax on a portion of any "excess distribution" it receives from the PFIC and any gain it derives from the disposition of such shares (collectively, "PFIC Income"), even if it distributes the PFIC Income as a taxable dividend to its shareholders. The Fund will also be subject to additional interest charges in respect of deferred taxes arising from the PFIC Income. Any such tax paid by the Fund as a result of its ownership of shares in a PFIC will not give rise to any deduction or credit to the Fund or to any shareholder. A PFIC is any foreign corporation (with certain exceptions) that, in general, meets either of the following tests for a taxable year: (1) at least 75% of its gross income is derived from "passive income" (including interest and dividends); or (2) an average of at least 50% of the value (or adjusted tax basis, if elected) of its assets produce, or are held for the production of, "passive income." The Fund's distributions of PFIC Income will not be eligible for the 15% and 20% maximum federal income tax rates on individual shareholders' "qualified dividend income" described in the Prospectus.

The Fund may elect to "mark to market" its stock in a PFIC. Under such an election, the Fund would include in gross income (and treat as ordinary income) each taxable year an amount equal to the excess, if any, of the fair market value of the PFIC stock as of the close of the taxable year over the Fund's adjusted basis in the PFIC stock. The Fund would be allowed a deduction for the excess, if any, of that adjusted basis over that fair market value, but only to the extent of any net mark-to-market gains included in gross income by the Fund for prior taxable years. The Fund's adjusted basis in the PFIC stock would be adjusted to reflect the amounts included in, or deducted from, gross income under this election. Amounts so included, as well as gain realized on the disposition of the PFIC stock, would be treated as ordinary income. The deductible portion of any mark-to-market loss, as well as any loss realized on the disposition of the PFIC stock to the extent that such loss does not exceed the net mark-to-market gains previously included in gross income by the Fund, would be treated as ordinary loss. The Fund generally would not be subject to the deferred tax and interest charge provisions discussed above with respect to PFIC stock for which a mark-to-market election has been made.

If the Fund purchases shares in a PFIC and elects to treat the PFIC as a "qualified electing fund," the Fund would be required to include in its gross income each taxable year its pro rata share of the ordinary income and net capital gains of the PFIC, even if the income and gains were not distributed to the Fund. Any such income would be subject to the Distribution Requirement and the calendar year Excise Tax distribution requirement described above. In most instances it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to make this election because some of the information required to make this election may not be easily obtainable.

Investors should be aware that determining whether a foreign corporation is a PFIC is a fact-intensive determination that is based on various facts and circumstances and thus is subject to change, and the principles and methodology used therein are subject to interpretation. As a result, (1) the Fund may not be able, at the time it acquires a foreign corporation's shares, to ascertain whether the corporation is a PFIC, and (2) a foreign corporation may become a PFIC after the Fund acquires

shares therein. While the Fund generally will seek not to invest in PFIC shares to avoid the tax consequences detailed above, there are no guarantees that it will be able to do so, and it reserves the right to make such investments as a matter of its investment policy.

## **G. State and Local Taxes**

The tax rules of the various states and their local jurisdictions with respect to an investment in the Fund may differ from the federal income tax rules described above. These state and local rules are not discussed herein. You are urged to consult your tax advisor as to the consequences of state and local tax rules with respect to an investment in the Fund.

## **H. Foreign Income Tax**

Investment income received by the Fund from sources within foreign countries and U.S. possessions and gains that the Fund realizes on the disposition of foreign securities (collectively, “foreign source income”) may be subject to foreign or possession income or other taxes withheld at the source (collectively, “foreign taxes”). The United States has entered into tax treaties with many foreign countries that may entitle the Fund to a reduced rate of foreign taxes imposed by, or exemption from taxes on foreign source income derived from, the particular country. It is impossible to know the effective rate of foreign tax in advance, since the amount of the Fund’s assets to be invested within various countries will vary.

If more than 50% of the value of the Fund’s total assets at the close of its taxable year consists of stocks or securities of foreign corporations, the Fund will be eligible and intends to file an election with the IRS to pass through to its shareholders the amount of foreign taxes it paid, as it has in the past. However, there can be no assurance that the Fund will be able to do so for the current or future taxable years. Pursuant to this election, each shareholder of the Fund (1) would be required to (a) include in gross income (in addition to dividends actually received) his or her pro rata share of foreign taxes paid by the Fund, (b) treat that share as having been paid by the shareholder, and (c) treat that share of those taxes and any dividend the Fund paid that represents foreign source income as the shareholder’s own income therefrom and (2) could either use the foregoing information in calculating the foreign tax credit against the shareholder’s federal income tax or deduct that share in computing taxable income.

A shareholder may be subject to rules that limit or reduce the ability to claim a credit for, or to fully deduct, his or her pro rata share of foreign taxes. Individual shareholders who have no more than \$300 (\$600 for married persons filing jointly) of creditable foreign taxes included on IRS Forms 1099 and all of whose foreign source income is “qualified passive income” may elect each taxable year to be exempt from the extremely complicated foreign tax credit limitation for federal income tax purposes (about which shareholders may wish to consult their tax advisors), in which event they would be able to claim a foreign tax credit without having to file the detailed Form 1116 that otherwise is required. A shareholder will not be entitled to credit or deduct his or her pro rata share of foreign taxes the Fund paid if the shareholder has not held the Fund’s shares for at least 16 days during the 31-day period beginning 15 days before the ex-distribution date for those shares. The minimum holding period will be extended if the shareholder’s risk of loss with respect to those shares is reduced by reason of holding an offsetting position. No deduction for foreign taxes may be claimed by a shareholder who does not itemize deductions. A foreign shareholder may not deduct or claim a credit for foreign taxes in determining his or her federal income tax liability unless the Fund dividends paid to him or her are “effectively connected” with the shareholder’s conduct of a U.S. trade or business.

## **I. Capital Loss Carryovers (“CLCOs”)**

The Fund may have capital loss carryovers (“CLCOs”) for a taxable year. CLCOs may be used to offset any current taxable year net realized capital gain (whether short-term or long-term) and will not expire. All CLCOs are listed in the Fund’s financial statements. Any such losses may not be carried back.

## OTHER MATTERS

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### A. The Trust and Its Shareholders

**General Information.** The Fund is a separate series of the Trust. The Trust is an open-end investment management company organized under Delaware law as a statutory trust on August 29, 1995. On January 5, 1996, the Trust succeeded to the assets and liabilities of Forum Funds, Inc. The Trust's trust instrument (the "Trust Instrument") permits the Trust to offer separate series ("funds") of shares of beneficial interest ("shares"). The Trust reserves the right to create and issue shares of additional funds. The Trust and each fund will continue indefinitely until terminated. Each fund is a separate mutual fund, and each share of each fund represents an equal proportionate interest in that fund. All consideration received by the Trust for shares of any fund and all assets of such fund belong solely to that fund and would be subject to liabilities related thereto. The other funds of the Trust are described in one or more separate Statements of Additional Information.

**Shareholder Voting and Other Rights.** Each share of a fund and each class of shares has equal dividend, distribution, liquidation and voting rights. Fractional shares have those rights proportionately, except that expenses related to the distribution of shares of each fund or class (and certain other expenses such as transfer agency, shareholder service and administration expenses) are borne solely by those shares. Each fund or class votes separately with respect to the provisions of any Rule 12b-1 plan that pertains to the fund or class and other matters for which separate fund or class voting is appropriate under applicable law. Generally, shares will be voted separately by each fund except if: (1) the 1940 Act requires shares to be voted in the aggregate and not by individual funds; or (2) the Board determines that the matter affects more than one fund and all affected funds must vote. The Board may also determine that a matter only affects certain funds or classes of the Trust and thus that only those funds or classes are entitled to vote on the matter. Delaware law does not require the Trust to hold annual meetings of shareholders, and it is anticipated that shareholder meetings will be held only when specifically required by federal or state law. There are no conversion or preemptive rights in connection with shares of the Trust.

All shares, when issued in accordance with the terms of the offering, will be fully paid and non-assessable.

A shareholder in a fund is entitled to the shareholder's pro rata share of all distributions arising from that fund's assets and, upon redeeming shares, will receive the portion of the fund's net assets represented by the redeemed shares.

Shareholders representing 10% or more of the Trust's (or a fund's) shares may, as set forth in the Trust Instrument, call meetings of the Trust (or fund) for any purpose related to the Trust (or fund), including, in the case of a meeting of the Trust, the purpose of voting on removal of one or more Trustees.

Pursuant to Delaware law, the Trust's Trust Instrument places certain limitations on the ability of shareholders to bring derivative actions on behalf of the Trust and certain direct claims. Such limitations include, but are not limited to, that (i) a pre-suit demand must be made on the Board; (ii) to the maximum extent permitted by law, the demand must be executed by at least three unaffiliated and unrelated shareholders who hold shares representing 10% or more of the all shares issued and outstanding or of the series or classes thereof to which such action relates if it does not relate to all series and classes thereof; (iii) the Trustees shall consider such request within a time frame that the Trustees in their discretion consider reasonable and appropriate; (iv) the Trustees shall be entitled to retain counsel or other advisers in considering the merits of the request and, to the maximum extent permitted by law, shall require an undertaking by the shareholder (or shareholders) making such request to reimburse the Trust for the expense of any such advisers in the event that the Trustees determine not to bring such action; (v) to the maximum extent permitted by law, any decision by the Trustees relating to the matter shall be final and binding upon the shareholders, and judicially unreviewable; and (vi) to the maximum extent permitted by law, a shareholder may bring a direct action or claim only if the shareholder (or group of shareholders) has suffered an injury distinct from that suffered by shareholders of the Trust or the relevant series or a class thereof generally; and (vii) to the maximum extent permitted by law, a shareholder may bring a direct action or claim predicated upon an express or implied right of action under the Declaration of Trust or the 1940 Act (excepting rights of action permitted under Section 36(b) of the 1940 Act), only if the shareholder (or group of shareholders) has obtained authorization from the Trustees to bring the action or claim.

The Trust's Trust Instrument also places limitations on the forum in which claims against the Trust may be heard. Unless the Board of Trustees consents in writing to the selection of an alternative forum, any suit, action or proceeding brought by or in the right of any shareholder or any person claiming any interest in any shares seeking to enforce any provision of, or based on any matter arising out of, related to, or in connection with, the Trust's Trust Instrument, including without limitation any claim of any nature against the Trust, any series or class, the Trustees or officers of the Trust, or a service provider shall be brought exclusively in the Delaware Court of Chancery to the extent that court has subject matter jurisdiction over the action or claims asserted and otherwise in the courts of the State of Delaware to the extent there is subject matter jurisdiction in

those courts for the claims asserted. Accordingly, shareholders may have to bring suit in what they may consider to be an inconvenient and potentially less favorable forum. The limitations described above relating to derivative actions and choice of forum do not apply to claims asserted under the federal securities laws, to the extent that any such federal laws, rules or regulations do not permit such application.

**Termination or Reorganization of Trust or its Series.** The Board, may, without prior shareholder approval, change the form of organization of the Trust by merger, consolidation or incorporation, so long as the surviving entity is an open-end management investment company. Under the Trust Instrument, the Trustees may also, without shareholder vote, sell and convey all or substantially all of the assets of the Trust to another trust, partnership, association or corporation, or cause the Trust to incorporate in the State of Delaware, so long as the surviving entity is an open-end management investment company that will succeed to or assume the Trust's registration statement.

Under the Trust Instrument, the Board may sell or convey the assets of a fund or reorganize such fund into another investment company registered under the 1940 Act without a shareholder vote.

## **B. Fund Ownership**

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 a shareholder who owns beneficially or through controlled companies more than 25% of the voting securities of a company or acknowledges the existence of control. Shareholders owning voting securities in excess of 25% may determine the outcome of any matter affecting and voted on by shareholders of the Fund.

As of July 5, 2022, the Trustees and officers of the Trust in aggregate owned less than 1% of the outstanding shares of beneficial interest of the Fund.

As of July 5, 2022, certain shareholders listed in Table 7 in Appendix B owned of record or beneficially 5% or more of the shares of the Fund.

From time to time, certain shareholders may own a large percentage of the shares of the Fund. Accordingly, those shareholders may be able to greatly affect (if not determine) the outcome of a shareholder vote. As of July 5, 2022, the shareholders listed in Table 7 in Appendix B who own more than 25% of the Fund may be deemed to control the Fund. "Control" for this purpose is the ownership of 25% or more of the Fund's voting securities.

## **C. Limitations on Shareholders' and Trustees' Liability**

Delaware law provides that Fund shareholders are entitled to the same limitations of personal liability extended to stockholders of private corporations for profit. In addition, the Trust Instrument contains an express disclaimer of shareholder liability for the debts, liabilities, obligations and expenses of the Trust. The Trust Instrument provides that if any shareholder or former shareholder of any fund is held personally liable, solely by reason of having been a shareholder (and not because of their acts or omissions or for some other reason), the shareholder or former shareholder shall be entitled out of assets belonging to the applicable fund to be held harmless from and indemnified against all losses and expenses arising from such liability. The Trust Instrument also provides that the Trust, on behalf of a fund, shall, upon request by a shareholder or former shareholder, assume the defense of any claim made against any shareholder for any act or obligation of that fund and satisfy any judgment thereon from the assets belonging to the fund. Thus, the risk of a shareholder incurring financial loss on account of shareholder liability is limited to circumstances in which Delaware law does not apply, no contractual limitation of liability is in effect, and the Fund is unable to meet its obligations.

The Trust Instrument provides that the trustees shall not be liable to any person other than the Trust and its shareholders. In addition, the Trust Instrument provides that the trustees shall not be liable for any conduct whatsoever, provided that a trustee is not protected against any liability to which he or she would otherwise be subject by reason of willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard of the duties involved in the conduct of his or her office. All persons contracting with or having a claim against the Trust or a particular fund may only look to the Trust assets (or assets belonging to a fund) for payment under such contract or claim. Neither the trustees nor any of the Trust's officers or employees (whether past, present or future) are personally liable for such claims.

## **D. Proxy Voting Procedures**

The Trust's and the Adviser's proxy voting procedures are included in Appendices C and D, respectively.

Information regarding how the Fund voted proxies relating to portfolio securities during the 12-month period ended June 30 is available: (1) without charge, upon request, by contacting the Transfer Agent at (866) MERK FUND or (866) 637-5386 (toll free); and (2) on the SEC's website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

#### **E. Code of Ethics**

The Trust and the Adviser have each adopted a code of ethics under Rule 17j-1 of the 1940 Act. These codes are designed to eliminate conflicts of interest between the Fund and personnel of the Trust and the Adviser. The codes permit such personnel to invest in securities, including securities that may be purchased or held by the Fund, subject to certain limitations. The Distributor relies on the principal underwriters exception under Rule 17j-1(c)(3), specifically where the Distributor is not affiliated with the Trust or the Adviser, and no officer, director or general partner of the Distributor serves as an officer, director or general partner of the Trust or the Adviser.

#### **F. Registration Statement**

This SAI and the Prospectus do not contain all of the information included in the Trust's registration statement filed with the SEC under the 1933 Act with respect to the securities offered hereby. The registration statement, including the exhibits filed therewith, may be examined at the office of the SEC in Washington, D.C. The SEC maintains a website ([www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov)) that contains this SAI, any material incorporated by reference, and other information regarding the Fund.

#### **G. Financial Statements**

The Fund's Financial Statements and Financial Highlights for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022 are incorporated by reference into this SAI from the Fund's Annual Report to shareholders, have been audited by BBD, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in its report, which is incorporated herein by reference, and have been so incorporated in reliance upon reports of such firm, given upon its authority as an expert in accounting and auditing.

## APPENDIX A – DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES RATINGS

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### Corporate and Municipal Long-Term Bond Ratings

Standard & Poor’s (“S&P”) Corporate and Municipal Long-Term Bond Ratings:

*The following descriptions of S&P’s long-term corporate and municipal bond ratings have been published by Standard & Poor’s Financial Service LLC.*

**AAA** - An obligation rated ‘AAA’ has the highest rating assigned by S&P. The obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments 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 commitments 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 weaken the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments 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 that could lead to the obligor’s inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments 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 commitments 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 commitments 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 commitments on the obligation.

**CC** - An obligation rated ‘CC’ is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment. The ‘CC’ rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but S&P Global Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.

**C** - An obligation rated ‘C’ is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared with obligations that are rated higher.

**D** - An obligation rated ‘D’ is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the ‘D’ rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within the next five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or thenext 30 calendar days. The ‘D’ rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on a obligation is lowered to ‘D’ if it is subject to a distressed debt reconstructing.

**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 rating categories.

**NR** - This indicates that a rating has not been assigned or is no longer assigned.

Moody's Investors Service, Inc. ("Moody's") Long-Term Corporate Bond Ratings:

*The following descriptions of Moody's long-term corporate bond ratings have been published by Moody's Investors Service, Inc. and Moody's Analytics Inc.*

**Aaa** - Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, subject to the lowest level of 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 judged to be medium-grade and subject to moderate credit risk and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

**Ba** - Obligations rated Ba are judged to be speculative 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 speculative, 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.

Modifiers: 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.

Additionally, a "(hyb)" indicator is appended to all ratings of hybrid securities issued by banks, insurers, finance companies, and securities firms. By their terms, hybrid securities allow for the omission of scheduled dividends, interest, or principal payments, which can potentially result in impairment if such an omission occurs. Hybrid securities may also be subject to contractually allowable write-downs of principal that could result in impairment. Together with the hybrid indicator, the long-term obligation rating assigned to a hybrid security is an expression of the relative credit risk associated with that security.

Moody's U.S. Municipal Long-Term Bond Ratings:

*The following descriptions of Moody's long-term municipal bond ratings have been published by Moody's Investors Service, Inc. and Moody's Analytics Inc.*

**Aaa** - Issuers or issues rated Aaa demonstrate the strongest creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

**Aa** - Issuers or issues rated Aa demonstrate very strong creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

**A** - Issuers or issues rated A present above-average creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

**Baa** - Issuers or issues rated Baa represent average creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

**Ba** - Issuers or issues rated Ba demonstrate below-average creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

**B** - Issuers or issues rated B demonstrate weak creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

**Caa** - Issuers or issues rated Caa demonstrate very weak creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

**Ca** - Issuers or issues rated Ca demonstrate extremely weak creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

**C** - Issuers or issues rated C demonstrate the weakest creditworthiness relative to other U.S. municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues.

Modifiers: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating category from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the issuer or 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 Ratings Ltd. ("Fitch") Corporate Bond Ratings:

*The following descriptions of Fitch's long-term corporate bond ratings have been published by Fitch, Inc. and Fitch Ratings Ltd.*

**AAA** - Highest credit quality. 'AAA' ratings denote the lowest expectation of credit risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

**AA** - Very high credit quality. 'AA' ratings denote expectations of very low credit risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

**A** - High credit quality. 'A' ratings denote expectations of low credit risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

**BBB** - Good credit quality. 'BBB' ratings indicate that expectations of credit risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

**BB** - Speculative. 'BB' ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to credit risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial alternatives may be available to allow financial commitments to be met.

**B** - Highly speculative. 'B' ratings indicate that material credit risk is present. For performing obligations, default risk is commensurate with the issuer being rated with an Issuer Default Rating ("IDR") in the ranges 'BB' to 'C'. For non-performing obligations, the obligation or issuer is in default, or has deferred payment, but the rated obligation is expected to have extremely high recovery rates consistent with a Recovery Rating of 'RR1' (outstanding recovery prospects given default).

**CCC** - Substantial credit risk. 'CCC' ratings indicate that substantial credit risk is present. For performing obligations, default risk is commensurate with an IDR in the ranges 'B' to 'C'. For non-performing obligations, the obligation or issuer is in default, or has deferred payment, but the rated obligation is expected to have a superior recovery rate consistent with a Recovery Rating of 'RR2' (superior recovery prospects given default).

**CC** - Very high levels of credit risk. 'CC' ratings indicate very high levels of credit risk. For performing obligations, default risk is commensurate with an IDR in the ranges 'B' to 'C'. For non-performing obligations, the obligation or issuer is in default, or has deferred payment, but the rated obligation is expected to have a good recovery rate consistent with a Recovery Rating of 'RR3' (good recovery prospects given default).

**C** - Exceptionally high levels of credit risk. 'C' indicates exceptionally high levels of credit risk. For performing obligations, default risk is commensurate with an IDR in the ranges 'B' to 'C'. For non-performing obligations, the obligation or issuer is in default, or has deferred payment, and the rated obligation is expected to have an average, below-average or poor recovery rate consistent with a Recovery Rating of 'RR4' (average recovery prospects given default), 'RR5' (below average recovery prospects given default) or 'RR6' (poor recovery prospects given default).

Defaulted obligations typically are not assigned 'RD' or 'D' ratings, but are instead rated in the 'CCC' to 'C' rating categories, depending upon their recovery prospects and other relevant characteristics. This approach better aligns obligations that have comparable overall expected loss but varying vulnerability to default and loss.

**Plus (+) or Minus (-)** The modifiers "+" or "-" may be appended to a rating to denote relative status within major rating categories. Such suffixes are not added to the 'AAA' obligation rating category, or to corporate finance obligation ratings in the categories below 'CCC'.

The terms "investment grade" and "speculative grade" have established themselves over time as shorthand to describe the categories 'AAA' to 'BBB' (investment grade) and 'BB' to 'D' (speculative grade). The terms "investment grade" and "speculative grade" are market conventions, and do not imply any recommendation or endorsement of a specific security for investment purposes. "Investment grade" categories indicate relatively low to moderate credit risk, while ratings in the "speculative" categories signal either a higher level of credit risk or that a default already occurred.

#### Fitch's Municipal Bond Long-Term Ratings:

*The following descriptions of Fitch's long-term municipal bond ratings have been published by Fitch, Inc. and Fitch Ratings Ltd.*

**AAA** - Highest credit quality. 'AAA' ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

**AA** - Very high credit quality. 'AA' ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

**A** - High credit quality. 'A' ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

**BBB** - Good credit quality. 'BBB' ratings indicate that expectations of credit risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

**BB** - Speculative. 'BB' ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time.

**B** - Highly speculative. 'B' ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

**CCC** - Substantial credit risk. 'CCC' ratings indicate that there is a very low margin for safety, and that default is a real possibility.

**CC** - Very high levels of credit risk. 'CC' ratings indicate default of some kind appears probable.

**C** - Exceptionally high levels of credit risk. 'C' ratings indicate default appears imminent or inevitable.

**D** - Default. 'D' ratings indicate a default. Default generally is defined as one of the following:

- failure to make payment of principal and/or interest under the contractual terms of the rated obligation;
- the bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other winding-up or cessation of the business of an issuer/obligor where payment default on an obligation is a virtual certainty; or
- distressed exchange of an obligation, where creditors were offered securities with diminished structural or economic terms compared with the existing obligation to avoid a probable payment default.

**Plus (+) or Minus (-)** - The modifiers “+” or “-” may be appended to a rating to denote relative status within major rating categories. Such suffixes are not added to the ‘AAA’ Long-Term Rating category, or to Long-Term Rating categories below ‘CCC’.

### **Municipal Short-Term Bond Ratings**

#### S&P’s Municipal Short-Term Bond Ratings:

*The following descriptions of S&P’s short-term municipal ratings have been published by Standard & Poor’s Financial Service LLC.*

**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.

**D** - 'D' is assigned upon failure to pay the note when due, completion of a distressed exchange offer, or the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions.

#### Moody’s Municipal Short-Term Ratings:

*The following descriptions of Moody’s short-term municipal ratings have been published by Moody’s Investors Service, Inc. and Moody’s Analytics Inc.*

**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.

#### Fitch’s Municipal Short-Term Credit Ratings:

*The following descriptions of Fitch’s municipal short-term credit ratings have been published by Fitch, Inc. and Fitch Ratings Ltd.*

**F1** - Highest short-term credit quality. Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments; may have an added “+” to denote any exceptionally strong credit feature.

**F2** - Good short-term credit quality. Good intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments.

**F3** - Fair short-term credit quality. The intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is adequate.

**B** - Speculative short-term credit quality. Minimal capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, plus heightened vulnerability to near term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.

**C** - High short-term default risk. Default is a real possibility.

**RD** - Restricted default. Indicates an entity that has defaulted on one or more of its financial commitments, although it continues to meet other financial obligations. Typically, applicable to entity ratings only.

**D** - Default. Indicates a broad-based default event for an entity, or the default of a short-term obligation.

### **Short-Term Credit Ratings**

#### S&P's Short-Term Credit Ratings:

*The following descriptions of S&P's short-term credit ratings have been published by Standard & Poor's Financial Service LLC.*

**A-1** - A short-term obligation rated 'A-1' is rated in the highest category by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments 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 commitments 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 commitments 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 weaken an obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**B** - A short-term obligation rated 'B' is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

**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 commitments on the obligation.

**D** - A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed debt restructuring.

**Dual Ratings** – Dual ratings may be assigned to debt issues that have a put option or demand feature. The first component of the rating addresses the likelihood of repayment of principal and interest as due, and the second component of the rating addresses only the demand feature. The first component of the rating can relate to either a short-term or long-term transaction and accordingly use either short-term or long-term rating symbols. The second component of the rating relates to the put option and is assigned a short-term rating symbol (for example, 'AAA/A-1+' or 'A-1+/A-1'). With U.S. municipal short-term demand debt, the U.S. municipal short-term note rating symbols are used for the first component of the rating (for example, 'SP-1+/A-1+').

#### Moody's Short-Term Ratings:

*The following descriptions of Moody's short-term credit ratings have been published by Moody's Investors Service, Inc. and Moody's Analytics Inc.*

**P-1** – Ratings of Prime-1 reflect a superior ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**P-2** – Ratings of Prime-2 reflect a strong ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**P-3** – Ratings of Prime-3 reflect 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.

Fitch's Short-Term Ratings:

*The following descriptions of Fitch's short-term credit ratings have been published by Fitch, Inc. and Fitch Ratings Ltd.*

**F1** - Highest short-term credit quality. Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments; may have an added "+" to denote any exceptionally strong credit feature.

**F2** - Good short-term credit quality. Good intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments.

**F3** - Fair short-term credit quality. The intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is adequate.

**B** - Speculative short-term credit quality. Minimal capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, plus heightened vulnerability to near term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.

**C** - High short-term default risk. Default is a real possibility.

**RD** - Restricted default. Indicates an entity that has defaulted on one or more of its financial commitments, although it continues to meet other financial obligations. Typically, applicable to entity ratings only.

**D** - Default. Indicates a broad-based default event for an entity, or the default of a specific short-term obligation.

**APPENDIX B – MISCELLANEOUS TABLES****Table 1 – Investment Advisory Fees**

The following table shows the dollar amount of fees accrued with respect to the Fund, the amount of fees waived and/or expenses reimbursed by the Adviser, if any, and the actual fees retained by the Adviser. The data is for the last three fiscal years.

<b>Period Ended</b>	<b>Advisory Fees Accrued</b>	<b>Advisory Fees Waived and/or Expenses Reimbursed</b>	<b>Advisory Fees Received</b>
March 31, 2022	\$555,719	\$2,665	\$553,054
March 31, 2021	\$597,430	\$10,620	\$586,810
March 31, 2020	\$756,661	\$18,619	\$738,042

**Table 2 – Distribution Fees (Investor Shares)**

The following table shows the dollar amount of the fees accrued by the applicable class, pursuant to the 12b-1 Distribution Plan, the amount of fee that was waived by the Distributor or its agents, if any, and the actual fees received by the Distributor or its agents. The data is for the last three fiscal years.

<b>Period Ended</b>	<b>Plan Fees Accrued</b>	<b>Plan Fees Waived</b>	<b>Plan Fees Received</b>
March 31, 2022	\$114,796	\$0	\$114,796
March 31, 2021	\$125,141	\$0	\$125,141
March 31, 2020	\$145,798	\$0	\$145,798

**Table 3 – Administration Fees**

The following table shows the dollar amount of fees accrued with respect to the Fund, the amount of fees waived by Apex Fund Services, if any, and the actual fees retained by Apex Fund Services. The data is for the last three fiscal years.

<b>Period Ended</b>	<b>Administration Fees Accrued</b>	<b>Administration Fees Waived</b>	<b>Administration Fees Received</b>
March 31, 2022	\$196,000	\$80,314	\$115,686
March 31, 2021	\$196,000	\$75,308	\$120,692
March 31, 2020	\$231,805	\$92,640	\$139,165

**Table 4 – Commissions**

The following table shows the aggregate brokerage commissions of the Fund. The data is for the last three fiscal years.

<b>Period Ended</b>	<b>Aggregate Brokerage Commissions (\$) Paid</b>	<b>Total Brokerage Commissions (\$) Paid to Affiliate of Fund, Adviser or Distributor</b>	<b>% of Brokerage Commissions Paid to Affiliate of Fund, Adviser or Distributor</b>	<b>% of Transactions Executed by Affiliate of Fund, Adviser or Distributor</b>
March 31, 2022	\$400	\$0	0%	0%
March 31, 2021	\$700	\$0	0%	0%
March 31, 2020	\$2,300	\$0	0%	0%

**Table 5 – Directed Brokerage**

The following table lists the Fund's directed brokerage in return for research services, the amount of transactions so directed and the amount of commissions generated therefrom. The data is for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Amount Directed</b>	<b>Amount of Commissions Generated</b>
Merk Hard Currency Fund	None	None

**Table 6 – Securities of Regular Brokers or Dealers**

The following table lists the Fund’s regular brokers and dealers whose securities (or the securities of the parent company) were acquired during the past fiscal year and the aggregate value of the Fund’s holdings of those securities as of the most recent fiscal year ended March 31, 2022.

Regular Broker or Dealer	Value of Securities Held
None	N/A

**Table 7 – Control Persons and 5% Shareholders**

The following table lists as of July 5, 2022: (1) the shareholders who owned 25% or more of the outstanding shares of the applicable class and thus may be deemed to be a control person of the Fund; and (2) the persons who owned beneficially or of record 5% or more of the outstanding shares of the applicable class. The Fund believes that these shares were owned of record by such holders for their fiduciary, agency or custodial accounts.

Name and Address	% of Fund Class
<b>Investor Shares</b>	
CHARLES SCHWAB & CO INC ATTN MUTUAL FUNDS 101 MONTGOMERY ST SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104	37.04%
NATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LLC 499 WASHINGTON BLVD JERSEY CITY, NJ 07310	18.37%
VANGUARD BROKERAGE SERVICES PO BOX 1170 VALLEY FORGE, PA 19482	7.84%
TD AMERITRADE INC FOR THE EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT OF OUR CLIENTS PO BOX 2226 OMAHA, NE 68103	7.75%
<b>Institutional Shares</b>	
VANGUARD BROKERAGE SERVICES PO BOX 1170 VALLEY FORGE, PA 19482	49.03%
CHARLES SCHWAB & CO INC ATTN MUTUAL FUNDS 101 MONTGOMERY ST SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104	10.54%
NATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LLC 499 WASHINGTON BLVD JERSEY CITY, NJ 07310	8.58%
DAVID KOTLABA DANVILLE, VA 24541	8.57%
TD AMERITRADE INC FOR THE EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT OF OUR CLIENTS PO BOX 2226 OMAHA, NE 68103	7.37%

**Forum Funds  
Shareholder Voting Policy**

**As of December 14, 2012**

**SECTION 1. BACKGROUND**

The Trust exercises its shareholder voting responsibilities as an investor in other issuers as a fiduciary, with the goal of maximizing the value of the Trust's and its shareholders' investments. This Policy details the Trust's policy with respect to shareholder voting.

**SECTION 2. ADVISER RESPONSIBILITIES**

(A) Delegation by Board. Each Fund has delegated to the Adviser the authority to vote as a shareholder of issuers whose securities are held in its portfolio. The Adviser shall maintain and the Board shall approve voting procedures related to the Adviser acting on behalf of the Fund in accordance with its fiduciary duties and the best interests of Fund shareholders.

(B) Delivery of Proxies. The Adviser is responsible for coordinating the delivery of proxies to be voted by the Custodian to the Adviser or to an agent of the Adviser selected by the Adviser to vote proxies with respect to which the Adviser has such discretion (a "Proxy Voting Service"). Upon request, the Adviser shall provide periodic reports to the Board as to the implementation and operation of its shareholder voting policies and procedures as they relate to the Trust.

(C) Conflicts of Interest. The Trust recognizes that under certain circumstances an Adviser or Proxy Voting Service may have a conflict of interest in voting on behalf of a Fund. A conflict of interest includes any circumstance when the Fund, the Adviser, the Distributor, the Proxy Voting Service or one or more of their Affiliated Persons (including officers, directors and employees) knowingly does business with, receives compensation from, or sits on the board of, a particular issuer or closely affiliated entity, and, therefore, may appear to have a conflict of interest between its own interests and the interests of Fund shareholders in how shares of that issuer are voted.

Each Adviser is responsible for maintaining procedures to identify and address material conflicts of interest and, when applicable, determine the adequacy of a Proxy Voting Service's procedures to identify and address material conflicts of interest.

(D) Voting Record. The Adviser shall be responsible for ensuring a voting record is maintained that includes all instances where the Fund was entitled to vote and will coordinate the annual delivery of such record to the Administrator for purposes of preparing the Trust's annual Form N-PX filing. The voting record shall include the following information required to be reported in Form N-PX:

- (1) The name of the issuer of the security;
- (2) The exchange ticker symbol of the security;
- (3) The CUSIP for the security;
- (4) The shareholder meeting date;
- (5) A brief identification of the matter voted on;
- (6) Whether the matter was proposed by the issuer or by a security holder;
- (7) Whether the Trust cast its vote on the matter;
- (8) How the Trust cast its vote (*e.g.*, for or against proposal, or abstain; for or withhold regarding election of directors); and
- (9) Whether the Trust cast its vote for or against management.

The Adviser shall also be responsible for ensuring information regarding how the Fund voted relating to portfolio securities during the twelve-month period ended June 30 is available on the Fund's website or other location consistent with disclosure in the Fund's registration statement.

### **SECTION 3: ABSTENTION**

The Trust and an Adviser may abstain from shareholder voting in certain circumstances. Abstaining from voting may be appropriate if voting would be unduly burdensome or expensive, or otherwise not in the best interest of a Fund's shareholders.

### **SECTION 4: BOARD REPORTING AND REVIEW**

(A) The Adviser shall submit its voting procedures to the Board for review and approval initially and at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board following any material change.

(B) The Adviser shall report to the Board, at least quarterly, whether any conflicts of interest arose while voting as an investor in other issuers and how such conflicts were handled.

**MERK INVESTMENTS LLC  
PROXY VOTING PROCEDURES AND POLICIES**

**Introduction**

Merk exercises its voting authority with a goal of maintaining or enhancing shareholder value of the companies in which it has invested Advisory Client assets. Unless an Advisory Client specifically reserves the right, in writing, to vote its own proxies, Merk will vote proxies in accordance with its proxy voting policy. Merk is committed to minimizing conflicts of interest when voting proxies on behalf of Advisory Clients and strives to ensure that proxies are voted in the best interests of Advisory Clients, including investors in the Private Funds. Merk has adopted the following:

- For routine matters, as the quality and depth of management is a primary factor considered when investing in an issuer, the recommendation of the issuer's management on any issue will be given substantial weight. The position of the issuer's management will not be supported in any situation where Merk assesses that it is not in the best interests of Clients and investors.
- For non-routine matters, such proposals should be examined on a case-by-case basis.
- Merk may abstain from voting a proxy if such vote cannot be cast with commercially reasonable efforts or if Merk deems it to be in the best interest of Advisory Clients and investors to abstain from voting a proxy.
- Merk may choose to abstain from voting for routine matters when it agrees with the recommendation of the issuer's management.

**Responsibility**

The CCO has the responsibility for monitoring compliance with our proxy voting policy, practices, disclosures and record keeping, including outlining our voting guidelines in our procedures.

**Procedure**

As a general rule, conflicts of interest will be resolved by Merk voting in accordance with its proxy voting policy when: Merk manages the account of a corporation or a pension fund sponsored by a corporation in which Advisory Clients of Merk also own stock; a Supervised Person or a member of his/her immediate family is on the Board of Directors or a member of senior management of the company that is the issuer of securities held in an Advisory Client's account; or Merk has a material relationship with a corporation whose securities are the subject of the proxy.

If Merk determines that it has a conflict of interest with respect to voting proxies on behalf of the Merk Mutual Funds, the CIO or CCO shall contact the Chairman of the Board of Registered Funds to seek their voting recommendation. Merk shall vote the proposal according the determination of the Board and maintain records relating to this process.

Advisory Clients that wish to obtain information on how specific proxies were voted, or a copy of Merk's proxy voting policy, may contact the CCO.

**Recordkeeping**

Merk shall retain the following proxy records in accordance with the SEC's five-year retention requirement:

- These policies and procedures and any amendments;
- Each proxy statement that the Firm receives;
- A record of each vote that the Firm casts;
- Any documents prepared by the Firm that were material to making a decision how to vote proxies, or that memorializes the basis of that decision.