

# MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE NCM CONSERVATIVE INCOME PORTFOLIO

September 30, 2023

# MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE NCM CONSERVATIVE INCOME PORTFOLIO

This annual management report of fund performance contains financial highlights but does not contain the annual financial statements of the investment fund. You can get a copy of the Fund's financial statements at your request, and at no cost, by calling toll free (877) 531-9355, by writing us at 1850, 333-7<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW Calgary, Alberta T2P 2Z1 or by visiting our website at www.ncminvestments.com or SEDAR+ at www.sedarplus.ca.

Security holders may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the investment fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.

# MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION OF FUND PERFORMANCE

# INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGIES

The investment objective of NCM Conservative Income Portfolio (the "Fund") is designed to provide investors with current income and the potential for capital preservation by investing, directly or indirectly through investments in underlying funds, in a diversified portfolio consisting primarily of fixed-income securities and to a lesser extent equity security from anywhere in the world.

The Fund achieves this objective by aiming to maintain a diversified portfolio of securities. The equity component of the Fund will generally range between 25% - 40%, while the fixed income component will generally range between 60% - 75%, based upon the portfolio manager's assessment of market conditions.

The Fund may invest up to all of its assets in securities of mutual funds, exchange traded funds, ("ETF") and/or direct securities as it seeks to diversify its exposures across geography, sectors, capitalization, credit quality, and duration. As such, the Fund may invest up to all of its assets in foreign securities. When selecting an underlying security for the Fund, the portfolio manager will aim to ensure that such investment is consistent with the Fund's investment objectives and will consider the market exposure of the security, the long term performance track record from a risk and reward perspective, and the associated fees, if any.

The Fund may invest in private placements or other illiquid equity or debt securities of public or private companies as permitted by securities regulations.

The Fund may engage in a limited amount of short selling as well as in securities lending, repurchase, and reverse repurchase transactions. The Fund may also invest in derivatives (including forward contracts, calls and puts) and in Horizon Beta Pro Exchange Traded Funds. These transactions will be used with the Fund's other investment strategies in a manner considered most appropriate to achieving the Fund's overall investment objectives and enhancing the Fund's returns.

The Fund may depart from its investment objectives and/or investment strategies by temporarily investing all or a portion of its assets in cash or fixed income securities issued or guaranteed by a Canadian or U.S. government, government agency, or company to try to protect it during a market downturn or for other reasons.

#### RISK

The risk level of the Fund is low-medium.

The Fund is suitable for investors with a low -medium risk tolerance seeking current income along with potential for capital gains. General risks of an investment in NCM Conservative Income Portfolio are detailed in the simplified prospectus and include equity risk, small and mid-capitalization company risk, series risk, liquidity risk, interest rate risk, and currency risk, among others.

The majority of the exposure in the Fund is to fixed income investments held in a mix of individual bonds and also fixed income ETF investments The concentration in bonds and bond ETFs makes the Fund highly sensitive to changes in interest rates.

#### **RESULTS OF OPERATIONS**

As of September 30, 2023, the twelve-month return for the Fund is 3.7%. This performance compares to the Fund's benchmark, which had a return of 4.3% over the same period. The Fund's benchmark is 5% S&P 3-Month Canada Treasury Bill Index, 62.5% FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index, 12.5% S&P/TSX Composite Total Return Index, 14% Morningstar Developed Markets Target Market Exposure NR USD, 6% Morningstar Developed Markets Target Market Exposure NR EUR.

The Fund underperformed its benchmark over this year. The performance was a combination of favorable fixed income allocations, negative impact caused by holding a global Fund underperformed its benchmark. which and underperformance in the fund's allocation to high growth new economy sensitive ETFs, namely e-Vehicles, Cyber Security Clean Energy. The Fund and has remained with its holding in these "new economy" ETFs and in addition has added ETFs representing direct exposure to the S&P 500 index and the NASDAQ 100 Index. In combination, these holdings increase the growth characteristics within the Fund. The Fund's holdings in fixed income continue to be relatively short term oriented which, in the Manager's opinion, creates a complementary defense balancing of the Fund's holdings.

Fixed income relative performance has been positive due to a combination of very short term holdings in an environment of rising interest rates. The Fund has also benefited from a relatively high exposure to high yield fixed income ETFs. High yield fixed income, in general, has outperformed other fixed income asset classes and the Fund has experienced the relative performance differential.

The Fund has maintained its positioning in short dated investment grade fixed income bonds while also maintaining a balance of short- and longer-term high yielding ETFs.

In the equity portion of the portfolio the Fund continues to hold individual securities for its Canadian equity exposure. During the year, the Fund sold all of its positions that represented the individual holdings of the NCM Core Canadian. The proceeds of these sales were reinvested in the individual positions that represent the NCM Income Growth Class. The purpose of this allocation change is to increase the growth characteristics of the Canadian equity allocation. The Fund also sold approximately half of its holdings in the NCM Core Global and redeployed those assets into three ETFs. The sales proceeds were split into ETFs tracking the S&P 500, the NASDAQ 100 and an index that tracks equity in non-North American developed countries.

The Manager believes that the Fund is positioned well in anticipation of global central bank easing. The timing of central bank easing is unknown and the Fund fixed income positioning is positioned and tailored to be defensive with regard to central bank policy risk.

On May 16, 2023, NCM Core Income Fund transferred all of its net assets to NCM Conservative Income Portfolio in exchange for units As a result, on that date, 77,649 Series AA units were issued at a NAV of \$22.39/unit and 83,352 Series F units were issued at a NAV of \$23.54/unit. The assets transferred were as follows:

(in Canadian dollars)	May 16, 2023
Cash and cash equivalents	3,736,429
Other liabilities - net of assets	(35,273)
Value of assets received and mutual fund	
units issued	3,701,156

On May 17, 2023, the risk rating of the Fund changed from low to low-medium. This change is due to a change in the Risk Classification Methodology mandated by the Canadian Securities Administrators. There has been no change to the investment objectives or strategies of the fund associated with the new risk rating.

The net assets have increased by 25.3% with net assets increasing from \$7,217,538 to \$9,040,436, \$210,339 of this change is attributable to positive investment performance and \$1,612,559 was due to positive net contributions to the Fund.

# **RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

Management fees of \$92,268 were incurred to NCM Asset Management Ltd. ("NCM"), the Fund's Manager and Portfolio Manager. Management fees are 1.75% for Series A, and Series T6 and 0.75% for Series F and Series F6, 1.25% for Series AA, of the series net asset value of the Fund and are calculated and paid monthly. In addition, administrative fees

# **RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (continued)**

of \$7,631 were paid to NCM. Administration fees are charged by NCM at or below cost. They relate to accounting, trading, record keeping, compliance, and other administrative costs.

NCM has agreed to absorb certain expenses associated with the Fund recorded in the financial statements, at September 30, 2023, in the amount of \$75,021

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The following tables show selected key financial information about the Fund's units and are intended to help you understand the Fund's financial performance for the fiscal years indicated. This information is derived from the Fund's audited annual financial statements.

#### Net asset value (NAV) per unit (1)

Series A	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Asset Value, beginning of year	21.91	25.44	25.83	26.12	25.00
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.77	0.48	0.53	0.75	0.78
Total expenses	(0.55)	(0.50)	(0.53)	(0.52)	(0.50)
Realized gains (losses) for the year	(0.23)	(1.61)	1.20	1.16	0.17
Unrealized gains (losses) for the year	0.65	(1.23)	(0.11)	(1.35)	1.75
Total increase (decrease) from operations	0.64	(2.86)	1.09	0.04	2.20
Distributions:					
From income	(0.20)	(0.62)	(1.47)	(0.65)	(0.15)
From dividends	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
From capital gains	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total distributions (2)	(0.20)	(0.62)	(1.47)	(0.65)	(0.15)
Net Asset Value, end of year <sup>(3)</sup>	22.25	21.91	25.44	25.83	26.12

Series F	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Asset Value, beginning of					
year	22.87	26.27	26.40	26.41	25.00
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.83	0.49	0.54	0.76	0.80
Total expenses	(0.34)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.24)	(0.23)
Realized gains (losses) for the					
year	(0.20)	(1.60)	1.22	1.18	0.17
Unrealized gains (losses) for the					
year	0.46	(1.31)	(0.08)	(1.00)	1.67
Total increase (decrease)					
from operations	0.75	(2.67)	1.42	0.70	2.41

Series F	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Distributions:					
From income	(0.21)	(0.64)	(1.54)	(0.65)	(0.15)
From dividends	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
From capital gains	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total distributions (2)	(0.21)	(0.64)	(1.54)	(0.65)	(0.15)
Net Asset Value, end of year <sup>(3)</sup>	23.49	22.87	26.27	26.40	26.41
Series T6	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Asset Value, beginning of year	19.21	23.21	23.76	24.92	24.25
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.67	0.46	0.50	0.76	0.70
Total expenses	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.48)	(0.46)	(0.43)
Realized gains (losses) for the year	(0.19)	(0.36)	1.06	1.15	0.15
Unrealized gains (losses) for the year	0.48	(1.53)	0.01	(1.07)	1.43
Total increase (decrease) from operations	0.50	(1.88)	1.09	0.38	1.85
Distributions:					
From income	(1.21)	(1.37)	(1.57)	(1.48)	(1.32)
From dividends	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
From capital gains	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total distributions (2)	(1.21)	(1.37)	(1.57)	(1.48)	(1.32)
Net Asset Value, end of year <sup>(3)</sup>	18.50	19.21	23.21	23.76	24.92

Series F6	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Asset Value, beginning of year	20.21	24.16	24.36	25.30	24.04
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.70	0.43	0.51	0.72	0.72
Total expenses	(0.29)	(0.24)	(0.26)	(0.24)	(0.18)
Realized gains (losses) for the year	(0.19)	(2.09)	1.16	1.12	0.15
Unrealized gains (losses) for the year	0.42	(1.08)	(0.09)	(1.03)	2.15
Total increase (decrease) from operations	0.64	(2.98)	1.32	0.57	2.84
Distributions:					
From income	(1.27)	(1.42)	(1.49)	(1.51)	(1.21)
From dividends	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
From capital gains	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total distributions (2)	(1.27)	(1.42)	(1.49)	(1.51)	(1.21)
Net Asset Value, end of year <sup>(3)</sup>	19.68	20.21	24.16	24.36	25.30

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Net asset value (NAV) per unit <sup>(1)</sup> (continued)

Series M	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019 <sup>(4)</sup>
Net Asset Value, beginning of year	24.32	27.69	27.58	27.37	27.22
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.87	0.42	0.62	0.88	0.15
Total expenses	(0.13)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.02)	-
Realized gains (losses) for the year	(0.25)	(1.74)	1.02	1.03	(0.01)
Unrealized gains (losses) for the year	0.60	3.06	(0.43)	(2.28)	0.01
Total increase (decrease) from operations	1.09	1.67	1.16	(0.39)	0.15
Distributions:					
From income	(0.23)	(0.67)	(1.58)	(0.68)	Nil
From dividends	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
From capital gains	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total distributions (2)	(0.23	(0.67)	(1.58)	(0.68)	Nil
Net Asset Value, end of year <sup>(3)</sup>	25.18	24.32	27.69	27.58	27.37

Series AA	<b>2023</b> <sup>(5)</sup>
Net Asset Value, beginning of year	-
Increase (decrease) from operations:	
Total revenue	0.31
Total expenses	(0.20)
Realized gains (losses) for the year	0.02
Unrealized gains (losses) for the year	(0.22)
Total increase (decrease) from operations	(0.09)
Distributions:	
From income	Nil
From dividends	Nil
From capital gains	Nil
Total distributions <sup>(2)</sup>	Nil
Net Asset Value, end of year <sup>(3)</sup>	22.30

(1) This information is provided as at September 30 in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

(2) Distributions, if any, are reinvested in additional units or paid in cash when requested.

(3) Net asset value and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase (decrease) from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the financial year. Due to the different methods of calculating individual components of the table, the sum of the individual components will not necessarily equal the ending net asset value.

(4) Series M commenced operations September 16, 2019

(5) Series AA commenced operations May 16, 2023

Ratios and Supplemental Data (1)

Series A	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Assets (000's of \$)	3,045	3,645	4,971	5,564	5,321
Number of units outstanding (000's)	137	166	195	215	204
Management expense ratio (MER) <sup>(2)</sup>	2.44%	2.43%	2.44%	2.36%	2.34%
MER before waivers or absorptions <sup>(2)</sup>	3.51%	3.52%	3.13%	3.04%	3.25%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(3)</sup>	45.82%	119.54%	37.60%	107.69%	15.47%
Trading expense ratio (4)	0.04%	0.16%	0.09%	0.14%	0.10%
Net asset value per unit	22.25	21.91	25.44	25.83	26.12

Series F	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Assets (000's of \$)	3,967	3,052	5,624	6,937	7,321
Number of units outstanding (000's)	169	133	214	263	277
Management expense ratio (MER) (2)	1.33%	1.33%	1.33%	1.24%	1.24%
MER before waivers or absorptions <sup>(2)</sup>	2.40%	2.42%	2.02%	1.92%	2.14%
Portfolio turnover rate (3)	45.82%	119.54%	37.60%	107.69%	15.47%
Trading expense ratio (4)	0.04%	0.16%	0.09%	0.14%	0.10%
Net asset value per unit	23.49	22.87	26.27	26.40	26.41

Series T6	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Assets (000's of \$)	49	51	565	543	173
Number of units outstanding (000's)	3	3	24	23	7
Management expense ratio (MER) <sup>(2)</sup>	2.46%	2.37%	2.38%	2.26%	2.26%
MER before waivers or absorptions <sup>(2)</sup>	3.53%	3.46%	3.07%	2.94%	3.17%
Portfolio turnover rate (3)	45.82%	119.54%	37.60%	107.69%	15.47%
Trading expense ratio (4)	0.04%	0.16%	0.09%	0.14%	0.10%
Net asset value per unit	18.50	19.21	23.21	23.76	24.92

Series F6	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Assets (000's of \$)	461	464	112	137	149
Number of units outstanding (000's)	23	23	5	6	6
Management expense ratio (MER) (2)	1.33%	1.37%	1.38%	1.30%	1.30%
MER before waivers or absorptions <sup>(2)</sup>	2.40%	2.46%	2.07%	1.98%	2.20%
Portfolio turnover rate (3)	45.82%	119.54%	37.60%	107.69%	15.47%
Trading expense ratio (4)	0.04%	0.16%	0.09%	0.14%	0.10%
Net asset value per unit	19.68	20.21	24.16	24.36	25.30

#### FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Series M	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019 <sup>(5)</sup>
Net Assets (000's of \$)	6	6	985	18	1
Number of units outstanding (000's)	0.25	0.25	36	1	0.04
Management expense ratio (MER) <sup>(2)</sup>	0.51%	0.49%	0.52%	0.45%	0.44%
MER before waivers or absorptions <sup>(2)</sup>	1.58%	1.58%	1.21%	1.13%	1.35%
Portfolio turnover rate (3)	45.82%	119.54%	37.60%	107.64%	15.47%
Trading expense ratio (4)	0.04%	0.16%	0.09%	0.14%	0.10%
Net asset value per unit	25.18	24.32	27.69	27.58	27.37

#### Ratios and Supplemental Data (1) (continued)

Series AA	2023 (6)
Net Assets (000's of \$)	1,513
Number of units outstanding (000's)	68
Management expense ratio (MER) <sup>(2)</sup>	1.88%
MER before waivers or absorptions (2)	2.99%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(3)</sup>	45.82%
Trading expense ratio (4)	0.04%
Net asset value per unit	22.30

- This information is provided as at September 30 in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.
- (2) Management expense ratio (MER) is based on the Funds total expenses for the stated year including the Funds proportionate share of the expenses of the underlying funds and is expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value of the year. As such, the MERs presented for the Funds is all -inclusive and includes the portion of MERs of the other funds attributable to the investment.
- (3) The Fund's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the Fund's Portfolio Manager manages its portfolio investments. A portfolio turnover rate of 100% is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all the securities in its portfolio once in the course of a year. The higher the Fund's portfolio turnover rate in a year, the greater the trading costs payable by the Fund in the year, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the year. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and performance of the Fund.
- (4) The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net assets during the year.
- (5) Series M commenced operations September 16, 2019
- (6) Series AA commenced operations May 16, 2023

#### **MANAGEMENT FEES**

The Fund pays an annual management fee of 1.75% for Series A, and Series T6 units, and 0.75% for Series F and Series F6 units, 1.25% for Series AA units, multiplied by the series net asset value of the Fund, to NCM, the Fund's Manager and Portfolio Manager. Management fees are calculated and paid monthly. There is no management fee attached to Series M. For the year ended September 30, 2023, management fees amounted to \$92,268. NCM paid servicing commissions of \$35,953 (i.e. 38.97%) from these management fees to investment dealers.

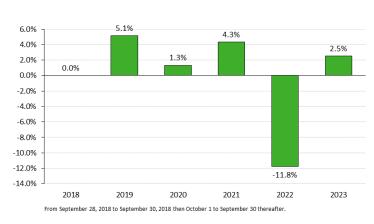
#### PAST PERFORMANCE

The charts below illustrate the performance of the Fund since inception in percentages. These charts reflect the performance you would have received if you invested in the Fund on the first day of the year through the last day of the year.

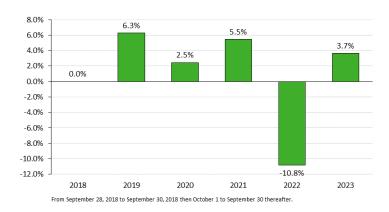
They assume that all distributions made by the Fund in the years shown are reinvested in additional securities of the Fund. They do not take into account sales, redemption, distribution or other optional charges which would have reduced returns or performance. Each year, the Fund's performance has changed and past performance does not guarantee future performance.

# YEAR BY YEAR RETURNS

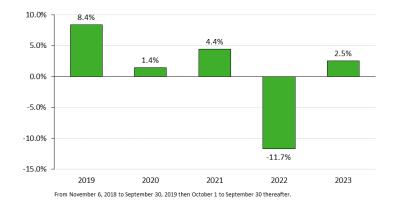
#### Series A



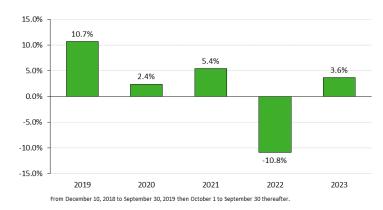




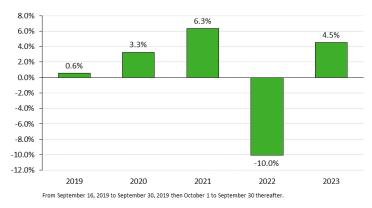
Series T6



#### Series F6



#### Series M



#### Series AA

This series has not yet completed twelve consecutive months of performance.

#### ANNUAL COMPOUND RETURNS

The following table shows the percent compounded returns to September 30, 2023 for each series of the Fund for the years indicated.

It also shows the returns for the Fund's benchmark index, which is 5% S&P 3-Month Canada Treasury Bill Index, 62.5% FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index, 12.5% S&P/TSX Composite Total Return Index, 14% Morningstar Developed Markets Target Market Exposure NR USD, 6% Morningstar Developed Markets Target Market Exposure NR EUR.

## **ANNUAL COMPOUND RETURNS (continued)**

	Series	Series	Series	Series	Series	
	Α	F	Т6	F6	М	Index
One year	2.5%	3.7%	2.5%	3.6%	4.5%	4.3%
Three Year*	-1.9%	-0.8%	-1.9%	-0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Five Year* Since Inception* – Series A (September	0.1%	1.2%				2.8%
28, 2018) Since Inception* – Series F (September	0.1%					2.8%
28, 2018) Since Inception* – Series T6		1.2%				2.8%
(November 06, 2018) Since Inception* – Series F6			0.8%			3.3%
(December 10, 2018) Since Inception* – Series M (September				2.1%		3.4%
16, 2019) * annualized					0.9%	1.7%

# SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

The following investments were held by the Fund as at September 30, 2023.

Investments	Percent of net assets
SPDR Bloomberg Short Term High Yield Bond ETF	7.3%
Parkland Corp., Callable, 6.000%, 2028/06/23	5.0%
Morguard Corp., Callable, Series 'F', 4.204%, 2024/11/27	4.9%
Province of Ontario, 2.600%, 2025/06/02	4.9%
NCM Core Global, Series 'O'	4.8%
Videotron Ltd., Callable, 3.625%, 2028/06/15	4.5%
AltaLink L.P., Callable, 2.747%, 2026/05/29	4.3%
Pembina Pipeline Corp., Callable, Series '10', 4.020%, 2028/03/27	4.4%
Fairfax Financial Holdings Ltd., Callable, 4.250%, 2027/12/06	4.4%
Bank of Montreal, Callable, 1.551%, 2026/05/28 Sun Life Financial Inc., Variable Rate, Callable, 2.800%,	4.3%
2033/11/21 Vanguard FTSE Developed All Cap ex North America Index	4.0%
ETF (CAD Hedged) Royal Bank of Canada, Variable Rate, Callable, 3.650%,	3.5%
2081/11/24	3.4%
Glacier Credit Card Trust, Series '2023', 6.881%, 2028/09/20	3.1%
Rogers Communications Inc., Restricted, 3.100%, 2025/04/15	3.0%
goeasy Ltd., Callable, 5.375%, 2024/12/01	2.9%
iShares CDN S&P 500 Hedged to Canadian Dollars Index Fund Toronto-Dominion Bank (The), Variable Rate, Perpetual, Series	2.6%
'28', 7.232%, 2027/10/01	2.3%
iShares NASDAQ 100 Index ETF (CAD-Hedged)	2.1%

	12.6%
Total Securities	98.8%
Total Securities	98.8%
Other	
Other	
Cash and cash equivalents	
Cash and cash equivalents	0.00/
	0.2%
	0.2%

Industry Sectors	
Energy	1.5%
Materials	0.3%
Industrials	1.0%
Consumer Discretionary	0.2%
Financials	1.5%
Utilities	0.3%
Real Estate	0.7%
Bonds	63.0%
Exchange Traded Funds	25.5%
Mutual Funds	4.8%
Other	1.2%
Total	100.0%

The investments held by the Fund change due to ongoing portfolio transactions. A revised summary is posted on our website at <u>www.ncminvestments.com</u> no later than 60 days after each quarter end.

## **OTHER MATERIAL INFORMATION**

The simplified prospectus and all other Fund related materials can be obtained by calling us toll-free at (877) 531-9355, by writing to us at 1850, 333-7<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW Calgary, Alberta T2P 2Z1 or from our website at www.ncminvestments.com.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK



Suite 1850, 333 7th Avenue S.W. Calgary, AB T2P 2Z1 (877) 431-1407 | ncminvestments.com