ADAMS NATURAL RESOURCES FUND, INC.
Form N-CSR
February 27, 2019

FORM N-CSR

CERTIFIED SHAREHOLDER REPORT OF REGISTERED MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT COMPANIES

Investment Company Act file number: 811-02736

ADAMS NATURAL RESOURCES FUND, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in charter)

500 East Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, Maryland 21202

(Address of principal executive offices)

Janis F. Kerns
Adams Natural Resources Fund, Inc.
500 East Pratt Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

(Name and address of agent for service)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (410) 752-5900
Date of fiscal year end: December 31

Date of reporting period: December 31, 2018

Item 1. Reports to Stockholders.

ADAMS
NATURAL RESOURCES
FUND

ANNUAL REPORT
2018

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2018 at a Glance

The Fund

- a closed-end equity investment company specializing in energy and other natural resources stocks
- objectives: preservation of capital, reasonable income, and opportunity for capital gain
- internally managed
- annual distribution of at least 6%

Stock Data (12/31/18)

NYSE Symbol	PEO
Market Price	$14.57
52-Week Range	$13.61 – $21.48
Discount	17.7%
Shares Outstanding	29,534,111

Summary Financial Information

Year Ended December 31,	2018	2017
Net asset value per share (NASDAQ: XPEOX)	$ 17.71	$ 23.26
Total net assets	522,997,331	674,388,286
Unrealized appreciation on investments	19,449,141	168,847,057
Net investment income	12,293,271	13,230,614
Net realized gain (loss)	11,062,665	19,900,174
Total return (based on market price)	-21.4%	4.6%
Total return (based on net asset value)	-18.5%	3.0%
Ratio of expenses to average net assets	0.79%	0.78%
Annual distribution rate	6.0%	6.1%

2018 Dividends and Distributions

Paid	Amount (per share)	Type
March 1, 2018	$ 0.02	Long-term capital gain
March 1, 2018	0.07	Investment income
March 1, 2018	0.01	Return of capital
June 1, 2018	0.07	Investment income
June 1, 2018	0.03	Return of capital
August 31, 2018	0.07	Investment income
August 31, 2018	0.03	Return of capital

December 21, 2018	0.38	Long-term capital gain
December 21, 2018	0.24	Investment income
December 21, 2018	0.25	Return of capital
	$ 1.17	

2019 Annual Meeting of Shareholders
Location: Adams Funds, 500 East Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202
Date: April 16, 2019
Time: 9:00 a.m.

Letter from Chief Executive Officer
Mark E. Stoeckle

Dear Fellow Shareholders,

Investors will remember 2018 as having one of the strongest economies in a decade driven in part by fiscal stimulus in the form of tax cuts and increased federal spending. Unemployment also reached its lowest rate in nearly 50 years at 3.7% and wage growth rose for the first time in 10 years. All of this led to GDP expanding at its fastest pace since 2014. However, in the fourth quarter, worries about the impact of higher interest rates and an escalating trade war weighed on the market. Investors entered the new year with renewed concerns about slowing economic growth.

The swings in the stock market in 2018 were in sharp contrast to the extremely low volatility experienced in 2017. This year provided a dose of reality and reminded everyone that markets sometimes can, and do, go down. The S&P 500 rose 11.2% through late September, then declined 19.4% from that peak. After the worst December since 1946, the S&P 500 ended the year down 4.4%. This ended a run of nine consecutive years of positive returns, marking the index's first negative return since the financial crisis in 2008.

The Energy sector experienced the highest volatility and the largest decline of any sector in the S&P 500 due primarily to a tumultuous year for oil. Crude oil prices reached over $76 a barrel in October, the highest level in four years, only to fall 40.8% due to concerns of oversupply.

"The Energy sector experienced the highest volatility and the largest decline of any sector in the S&P 500."

Adams Natural Resources Fund, with exposure to both Energy and Materials, declined 18.5% on net asset value and 21.4% on market price for the year. To align better with our investment strategy, in the fourth quarter we adopted a new blended benchmark comprised of the S&P 500 Energy Sector (80%) and the S&P 500 Materials Sector (20%). This benchmark declined 17.4% for the year and our peer group, the Lipper Global Natural Resources Fund Average, declined 21.0%. We distributed 6.0% to our shareholders in 2018, in line with our commitment.

2018 Market Recap

Oil prices spent most of 2018 rising to levels not seen in the past four years, but it took only three months to give all of it back and more. For the year, oil prices were down 25.0%. For Energy investors, it was particularly frustrating since stock prices

lagged oil prices as they rose during the first three quarters of the year, but traded in line with the commodity when it declined in the fourth quarter.

The first quarter was marked by signs of strengthening oil demand, rising geopolitical concerns, and efforts by OPEC to reduce supply, which drove prices higher. However, Energy stocks trailed the commodity as investors were skeptical of the sustainability of these levels.

Crude oil prices reached $74 a barrel in June as concerns over supply drove oil prices higher and stock prices followed. Energy was the best-performing sector in the S&P 500 in the second quarter, increasing 13.5%.

Volatility continued in the third quarter. Prices moved higher amid expectations that U.S. sanctions against Iran would eliminate the country's oil from the global supply by a November deadline. This catalyst, however, was offset by worries about rising trade tensions between the U.S. and China, which would impact global growth and demand for oil. In September, the U.S. imposed tariffs of up to 25.0% on $250 billion of Chinese goods, while China replied in kind with tariffs on $110 billion of American exports.

After rising to over $76 a barrel in October, prices fell due to concerns of excess supply, caused by higher U.S. shale production and unexpected waivers on Iran sanctions, and reduced confidence in global growth. Crude oil ended the year at $45 a barrel, a 40.8% decline from its October high.

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Letter To Shareholders (continued)

Portfolio Performance

While it was a challenging year for the overall stock market, it was particularly difficult for the Energy and, to a lesser extent, Materials sectors. It was hard to escape the volatility as every industry group within the Energy sector was down double digits on the year. Our Fund’s performance reflected concentrations in these sectors.

Refiners performed well for the first nine months of the year due to the large spread between the cost to buy and process crude oil and the price at which it can be sold. Refiners also benefited from an environmental mandate by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to reduce air pollution by the year 2020 (known as IMO 2020). This mandate is expected to increase demand for refined products. However, in the fourth quarter, concerns that the U.S. may try to push back the implementation of IMO 2020, combined with a contraction in the spread of oil prices, caused refiners to sell off.

The Storage & Transportation group outperformed, but was still down 13.6% on an absolute basis. Our investment in Cheniere Energy, the largest liquified natural gas (LNG) company in the U.S., continues to generate solid returns for the Fund, increasing 9.9% for the year. As the market leader, it is benefiting from the growing demand and limited supply of LNG. We see these favorable dynamics continuing in 2019.

Exploration & Production (E&P) stocks were challenged, down 20.7% for 2018. During the year, we reduced our exposure to E&P companies focused on the Permian Basin due to ongoing transportation bottlenecks. One standout was ConocoPhillips, a positive contributor to our performance due to its capital discipline and strong cash flow that it is returning to shareholders.

Equipment & Services was the weakest industry group, down 44.4% for the year. As oil prices declined, demand for oil services fell in lockstep. Our holding in Oil States International was a positive contributor to our Fund, but its impact was more than offset by our investments in Weatherford International and Halliburton.

The Materials sector was also impacted by concerns about slowing global growth, particularly from China. Our holdings in Materials declined 14.8%, in line with our benchmark. While our investments in fertilizer stocks, CF Industries and Mosaic, generated strong returns, it was not enough to offset weakness in metals and other chemical stocks.

Outlook for 2019

The economy remains strong as evidenced by low unemployment, rising wages, and strong consumer confidence. However, we expect the pace of domestic growth to slow in 2019 as the effects of rising interest rates and tariffs flow through the economy. The tailwinds provided by the corporate tax cuts and fiscal stimulus in 2018 will begin to fade in 2019. Overall, we expect earnings growth rates to be positive, but to slow meaningfully from last year's high levels. The ongoing trade dispute with China and the pace at which the Fed is unwinding its “easy money” policies will likely create further volatility in the market. We are most concerned about China and the impact that a slowdown in their economy could have on global growth. Although the Fed currently foresees for two rate hikes in 2019, it has indicated a willingness to be responsive to changing economic conditions.

With oil prices near 18-month lows entering 2019, we expect OPEC to intervene to stabilize pricing in the near term. We could also see slowing U.S. production due to lower oil prices, which should reduce supply levels. However, we expect the oil market to remain volatile due to uncertainty surrounding global demand.

We currently see opportunities within the E&P group, which has broadly committed to capital discipline, spending within cash flow, and returning cash to shareholders. In addition, with more pipelines set to come onboard in mid-2019, we expect to see stabilization in the Permian Basin. Diamondback Energy and EOG Resources are well positioned to generate strong returns due to their low-cost asset bases, which enable each of these companies to operate profitably in a low oil price environment. We added to our Anadarko Petroleum position in the fourth quarter after an overhang on the stock was removed when voters resoundingly defeated a ballot initiative to limit drilling in Colorado. We continue to like Anadarko’s focus on returning capital to shareholders through buybacks and dividends.

In the fourth quarter, we reduced our exposure to Equipment & Services and expect this segment to continue to struggle. E&P companies continue to find ways to recover oil faster and more economically, putting pressure on the margins of service companies. Given the sharp decline in crude oil prices, which will likely lead to lower E&P capital expenditure budgets, we anticipate a reduction in demand for oilfield services.

We begin 2019 with a government shutdown, global trade uncertainty, and concerns over global economic growth. The only thing anyone knows for sure is that it will be a bumpy ride in 2019. We believe it is important to remember that even in volatile markets, there are stocks that will outperform. Active management becomes increasingly important in this environment. Our job as active managers is to identify these opportunities.

We recognize that it has been difficult to be an Energy investor over the past several years. U.S. shale production has changed the dynamics in the oil market with U.S. output reaching over 11 million barrels a day, on par with Saudi Arabia. However, the Energy sector has been a victim of its own success as shale production has lowered the global marginal cost of supply and forced companies to improve their cost structures. At the end of the day, there is a finite amount of the commodity and we believe that we are closer to equilibrium than we have been in many years. There is still a need and strong demand for fossil fuels, and, in our view, the Energy sector is oversold heading into 2019.

We thank you for investing with Adams Funds. We remain focused on delivering consistent investment returns for shareholders by identifying quality companies that are executing at high levels and trading at attractive valuations.

By order of the Board of Directors,

Mark E. Stoeckle
Chief Executive Officer
January 18, 2019

Investment Growth

(unaudited)

This chart shows the value of hypothetical $10,000 investments in the Fund at net asset value and market price over the past 20 years. All Fund distributions are reinvested at the price received in the Fund’s dividend reinvestment plan. Returns do not reflect taxes paid by shareholders on distributions or the sale of shares.

Average Annual Total Returns at 12/31/18

	Years				
	1	3	5	10	15
PEO NAV	-18.5 %	0.9 %	-5.2 %	4.3 %	5.6 %
PEO Market Price	-21.4 %	-0.4 %	-5.8 %	3.8 %	4.3 %
Lipper Global Natural Resources Funds Average*	-21.0 %	1.6 %	-6.9 %	1.5 %	3.5 %

*
Source: Thomson Reuters

Disclaimers

This report contains “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. By their nature, all forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties, and actual results could differ materially from those contemplated by the forward-looking statements. Several factors that could materially affect the Fund’s actual results are the performance of the portfolio of stocks held by the Fund, the conditions in the U.S. and international financial markets, the price at which shares of the Fund will trade in the public markets, and other factors discussed in the Fund’s periodic filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

This report is transmitted to the shareholders of the Fund for their information. It is not a prospectus, circular or representation intended for use in the purchase or sale of shares of the Fund or of any securities mentioned in the report. The rates of return will vary and the principal value of an investment will fluctuate. Shares, if sold, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Past performance is no guarantee of future investment results.

Portfolio Highlights

December 31, 2018
(unaudited)
Ten Largest Equity Portfolio Holdings

	Market Value	Percent of Net Assets
Exxon Mobil Corporation	$ 98,822,994	18.9%
Chevron Corporation	66,046,409	12.6
DowDuPont Inc.	25,463,700	4.9
EOG Resources, Inc.	24,558,336	4.7
ConocoPhillips	23,580,770	4.5
Occidental Petroleum Corporation	22,661,496	4.3
Marathon Petroleum Corporation	20,994,873	4.0
Schlumberger Limited	15,536,048	3.0
Kinder Morgan, Inc.	14,767,876	2.8
Phillips 66	14,505,506	2.8
	$ 326,938,008	62.5%

Industry Weightings

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

December 31, 2018

Assets		
Investments at value*:		
Common stocks (cost $500,889,263)	$ 520,338,704	
Short-term investments (cost $3,756,667)	3,756,367	$ 524,095,071
Cash (includes restricted cash of $780,000) (note 4)		933,675
Investment securities sold		8,366,693
Total return swap agreements terminated		856,924
Dividends receivable		761,592
Prepaid expenses and other assets		885,089
Total Assets		535,899,044
Liabilities		
Investment securities purchased		9,402,822
Obligations to return collateral (note 4)		780,000
Due to officers and directors (note 8)		1,593,735
Accrued expenses and other liabilities		1,125,156
Total Liabilities		12,901,713
Net Assets		$ 522,997,331
Net Assets		
Common Stock at par value $0.001 per share, authorized 50,000,000 shares; issued and outstanding 29,534,111 shares (includes 21,345 deferred stock units) (note 7)		$ 29,534
Additional capital surplus		504,081,818
Total distributable earnings (loss)		18,885,979
Net Assets Applicable to Common Stock		$ 522,997,331
Net Asset Value Per Share of Common Stock		$ 17.71

*
See Schedule of Investments beginning on page 15.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.
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Statement of Operations

Year Ended December 31, 2018

Investment Income	
Income:	
Dividends (net of $30,744 in foreign taxes)	$ 17,318,662
Other income	108,452
Total Income	17,427,114
Expenses:	
Investment research compensation and benefits	2,360,296
Administration and operations compensation and benefits	1,202,940
Directors' compensation	505,667
Occupancy and other office expenses	321,877
Shareholder reports and communications	187,564
Investment data services	180,119
Transfer agent, custody, and listing fees	126,749
Audit and tax services	101,535
Accounting, recordkeeping, and other professional fees	86,958
Insurance	51,130
Legal services	9,008
Total Expenses	5,133,843
Net Investment Income	12,293,271
Realized Gain (Loss) and Change in Unrealized Appreciation	
Net realized gain (loss) on investments	11,129,130
Net realized gain (loss) on total return swap agreements	(66,465)
Change in unrealized appreciation on investments	(149,397,916)
Change in unrealized appreciation on total return swap agreements	—
Net Gain (Loss)	(138,335,251)
Change in Net Assets from Operations	$ (126,041,980)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.
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Statements of Changes in Net Assets

	For the Year Ended December 31,	
	2018	2017
From Operations:		
Net investment income	$ 12,293,271	$ 13,230,614
Net realized gain (loss)	11,062,665	19,900,174
Change in unrealized appreciation	(149,397,916)	(19,426,261)
Change in Net Assets from Operations	(126,041,980)	13,704,527
Distributions to Shareholders from:		
Total distributable earnings	(24,607,415)	—
Return of capital	(9,317,331)	—
Net investment income	—	(13,133,440)
Net realized gain	—	(20,556,258)
Change in Net Assets from Distributions	(33,924,746)	(33,689,698)
From Capital Share Transactions:		
Value of shares issued in payment of distributions (note 5)	8,676,357	8,430,416
Deferred compensation (notes 5, 7)	(100,586)	61,012
Change in Net Assets from Capital Share Transactions	8,575,771	8,491,428
Total Change in Net Assets	(151,390,955)	(11,493,743)
Net Assets:		
Beginning of year	674,388,286	685,882,029
End of year *	$ 522,997,331	$ 674,388,286

*
Parenthetical disclosure of undistributed net investment income is no longer required. For the year ended December 31, 2017, end of year net assets included undistributed net investment income of $361,422.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.
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Notes To Financial Statements

Adams Natural Resources Fund, Inc. (the "Fund") is registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940 ("1940 Act") as a non-diversified investment company. The Fund is an internally managed closed-end fund specializing in energy and other natural resources stocks. The investment objectives of the Fund are preservation of capital, the attainment of reasonable income from investments, and an opportunity for capital appreciation.

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Presentation — The accompanying financial statements were prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ("GAAP") for investment companies, which require the use of estimates by Fund management. Management believes that estimates and valuations are appropriate; however, actual results may differ from those estimates and the valuations reflected in the financial statements may differ from the value the Fund ultimately realizes.

Affiliates — Adams Diversified Equity Fund, Inc. ("ADX"), a diversified, closed-end investment company, owns 7.4% of the Fund's outstanding shares and is, therefore, an "affiliated company" as defined by the 1940 Act. During the year ended December 31, 2018, the Fund paid dividends, long-term capital gain distributions, and return of capital distributions of $2,558,525 to ADX. Directors of the Fund are also directors of ADX. The Fund, ADX, and Adams Funds Advisers, LLC ("AFA"), an ADX-affiliated investment adviser to external parties, have a shared management team.

Expenses — The Fund shares personnel, systems, and other infrastructure items with ADX and AFA and is charged a portion of the shared expenses. To protect the Fund from potential conflicts of interest, policies and procedures are in place covering the sharing of expenses among the entities. Expenses solely attributable to an entity are charged to that entity. Expenses that are not solely attributable to one entity are allocated in accordance with the Fund's expense sharing policy. The Fund's policy dictates that expenses, other than those related to personnel, are attributed to AFA based on the average percentage of time spent by all personnel on AFA-related activities relative to overall job functions; the remaining portion is attributed to the Fund and ADX based on relative net assets. Personnel-related expenses are attributed to AFA based on the individual's time spent on AFA-related activities; the remaining portion is attributed to the Fund and ADX based on relative time spent for portfolio managers, relative market values of portfolio securities covered for research staff, and relative net assets for all others. Expense allocations are updated quarterly, except for those related to payroll, which are updated annually.

During the year ended December 31, 2018, expenses of $2,526,783 and $229,291 were charged to ADX and AFA, respectively, in accordance with the Fund's expense sharing policy. There were no amounts due to, or due from, affiliated companies at December 31, 2018.

Investment Transactions, Investment Income, and Distributions — The Fund's investment decisions are made by the portfolio management team with recommendations from the research staff. Policies and procedures are in place covering the allocation of investment opportunities among the Fund and its affiliates to protect the Fund from potential conflicts of interest. Investment transactions are accounted for on trade date. Realized gains and losses on sales of investments are recorded on the basis of specific identification. Dividend income and distributions to shareholders are recognized on the ex-dividend date.

Valuation — The Fund's financial instruments are reported at fair value, which is defined as the price that would be received from selling an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The Fund has a Valuation Committee ("Committee") so that financial instruments are appropriately priced at fair value in accordance with GAAP and the 1940 Act. Subject to

Notes To Financial Statements (continued)

oversight and approval by the Board of Directors, the Committee establishes methodologies and procedures to value securities for which market quotations are not readily available.

GAAP establishes the following hierarchy that categorizes the inputs used to measure fair value:

- Level 1 — fair value is determined based on market data obtained from independent sources; for example, quoted prices in active markets for identical investments;
- Level 2 — fair value is determined using other assumptions obtained from independent sources; for example, quoted prices for similar investments;
- Level 3 — fair value is determined using the Fund's own assumptions, developed based on the best information available under the circumstances.

Investments in securities traded on national exchanges are valued at the last reported sale price as of the close of regular trading on the relevant exchange on the day of valuation. Over-the-counter and listed equity securities for which a sale price is not available are valued at the last quoted bid price. Money market funds are valued at net asset value. These securities are generally categorized as Level 1 in the hierarchy.

Total return swap agreements are valued using independent, observable inputs, including underlying security prices, dividends, and interest rates. These securities are generally categorized as Level 2 in the hierarchy.

At December 31, 2018, the Fund's financial instruments were classified as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Assets:				
Common stocks	$ 520,338,704	$ —	$ —	$ 520,338,704
Short-term investments	3,756,367	—	—	3,756,367
Total investments	$ 524,095,071	$ —	$ —	$ 524,095,071

2. FEDERAL INCOME TAXES

No federal income tax provision is required since the Fund's policy is to qualify as a regulated investment company under the Internal Revenue Code and to distribute substantially all of its taxable income and gains to its shareholders. Additionally, management has analyzed the tax positions included in federal income tax returns from the previous three years that remain subject to examination and concluded no provision was required. Any income tax-related interest or penalties would be recognized as income tax expense. At December 31, 2018, the identified cost of securities for federal income tax purposes was $504,718,647 and net unrealized appreciation aggregated $19,376,424 consisting of gross unrealized appreciation of $103,283,101 and gross unrealized depreciation of $83,906,677.

Distributions are determined in accordance with the Fund's annual 6% minimum distribution rate commitment, based on the Fund's average market price, and income tax regulations, which may differ from GAAP. Such differences are primarily related to the Fund's retirement plans and equity-based compensation. Differences that are permanent, while not material for the year ended December 31, 2018, are reclassified in the capital accounts of the Fund's financial statements and have no impact on net assets. For tax purposes, distributions paid by the Fund during the years ended December 31, 2018 and December 31, 2017 were classified as ordinary income of $13,086,171 and $13,121,928, respectively, long-term capital gain of $11,556,535 and $20,539,634, respectively, and return of capital of $9,317,331 and $0, respectively. The tax basis of distributable earnings at December 31, 2018 was $0 of undistributed ordinary income and $0 of undistributed long-term capital gain.

Notes To Financial Statements (continued)

3. INVESTMENT TRANSACTIONS

Purchases and sales of portfolio investments, other than short-term investments, securities lending collateral, and derivative transactions, during the year ended December 31, 2018 were $303,835,114 and $312,947,188, respectively.

4. DERIVATIVES

During the year ended December 31, 2018, the Fund invested in derivative instruments. The Fund uses derivatives for a variety of purposes, including, but not limited to, the ability to gain or limit exposure to particular market sectors or securities, to provide additional income, to limit equity price risk in the normal course of pursuing its investment objectives, and/or to obtain leverage.

Total Return Swap Agreements — Total return swap agreements are bilateral contracts between the Fund and a counterparty in which the Fund, in the case of a long contract, agrees to receive the positive total return (and pay the negative total return) of an underlying equity security and to pay a financing amount, based on a notional amount and a referenced interest rate, over the term of the contract. In the case of a short contract, the Fund agrees to pay the positive total return (and receive the negative total return) of the underlying equity security and to receive or pay a financing rate, based on a notional amount and a referenced interest rate, over the term of the contract. The fair value of each total return swap agreement is determined daily with the change in the fair value recorded as a change in unrealized appreciation on total return swap agreements in the Statement of Operations. Upon termination of a swap agreement, the Fund recognizes a realized gain (loss) on total return swap agreements in the Statement of Operations equal to the net receivable (payable) amount under the terms of the agreement.

Total return swap agreements entail risks associated with counterparty credit, liquidity, and equity price risk. Such risks include that the Fund or the counterparty may default on its obligation, that there is no liquid market for these agreements, and that there may be unfavorable changes in the price of the underlying equity security. To mitigate the Fund's counterparty credit risk, the Fund enters into master netting and collateral arrangements with the counterparty. A master netting agreement allows either party to terminate the agreement prior to termination date and to net amounts due across multiple agreements upon settlement, providing for a single net settlement with a counterparty. Pursuant to master netting arrangements, the net cumulative unrealized gain (asset) on open total return swap agreements and net cumulative unrealized loss (liability) on open total return swap agreements are presented in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities. The Fund's policy is to net all derivative instruments subject to a netting agreement. At December 31, 2018, there were no open total return swap agreements. During the year ended December 31, 2018, the average daily notional amounts of open long and (short) total return swap agreements, an indicator of the volume of activity, were $3,100,623 and $(3,078,294), respectively.

A collateral arrangement requires each party to provide collateral with a value, adjusted daily and subject to a minimum transfer amount, equal to the net amount owed to the other party under the agreement. The counterparty provides cash collateral to the Fund and the Fund provides collateral by segregating portfolio securities, subject to a valuation allowance, into a tri-party account at its custodian. At December 31, 2018, there were no securities pledged as collateral and cash collateral of $780,000 was held by the Fund, classified as restricted cash in the Statement of Assets and Liablities.

5. CAPITAL STOCK

The Fund has 5,000,000 authorized and unissued preferred shares, $0.001 par value.

On December 21, 2018, the Fund issued 536,703 shares of its Common Stock at a price of $16.05 per share (the average market price on December 12, 2018) to shareholders of record November 26, 2018, who elected to take stock in payment of the year-end distribution. During the year ended December 31, 2018, the Fund issued 3,551 shares of Common Stock at a weighted average price of $17.52 per share as dividend equivalents to holders of deferred stock units and restricted stock units under the 2005 Equity Incentive Compensation Plan.

On December 20, 2017, the Fund issued 448,248 shares of its Common Stock at a price of $18.77 per share (the average market price on December 8, 2017) to shareholders of record November 22, 2017, who elected to take stock in payment of the year-end distribution. During the year ended December 31, 2017, the Fund issued 892 shares of Common Stock at a weighted average price of $18.85 per share as dividend equivalents to holders of deferred stock units and restricted stock units under the 2005 Equity Incentive Compensation Plan.

The Fund may purchase shares of its Common Stock from time to time, in accordance with parameters set by the Board of Directors, at such prices and amounts as the portfolio management team deems appropriate. There were no shares repurchased by the Fund in 2018 or 2017. Transactions in Common Stock for 2018 and 2017 were as follows:

	Shares		Amount	
	2018	2017	2018	2017
Shares issued in payment of distributions	540,254	449,140	$ 8,676,357	$ 8,430,416
Net activity under the 2005 Equity Incentive Compensation Plan	(5,339)	(5,249)	(100,586)	61,012
Net change	534,915	443,891	$ 8,575,771	$ 8,491,428

6. RETIREMENT PLANS

The Fund sponsors a qualified defined contribution plan for all employees with at least six months of service and a nonqualified defined contribution plan for eligible employees to supplement the qualified plan. The Fund matches employee contributions made to the plans and, subject to Board approval, may also make a discretionary contribution to the plans. During the year ended December 31, 2018, the Fund recorded matching contributions of $169,611 and a liability, representing the 2018 discretionary contribution, of $125,898.

7. EQUITY-BASED COMPENSATION

The Fund's 2005 Equity Incentive Compensation Plan, adopted at the 2005 Annual Meeting and reapproved at the 2010 Annual Meeting, expired on April 27, 2015. Restricted stock units granted to non-employee directors that are 100% vested, but payment of which has been deferred at the election of the director, remain outstanding at December 31, 2018.

Outstanding awards were granted at fair market value on grant date (determined by the average of the high and low price on that date) and earn an amount equal to the Fund's per share distribution, payable in reinvested shares, which are paid concurrently with the payment of the original share grant. A summary of the activity during the year ended December 31, 2018 is as follows:

Awards	Shares/Units	Weighted Average Grant-Date Fair Value
Balance at December 31, 2017	38,087	$ 26.44
Reinvested dividend equivalents	3,551	17.52
Vested & issued	(20,293)	21.76
Balance at December 31, 2018	21,345	$ 27.32

Compensation cost is based on the fair market value of the award on grant date and recognized on a straight-line basis over the vesting period. Any compensation cost recognized related to an award that is

Notes To Financial Statements (continued)

subsequently forfeited due to unmet service conditions is reversed. Total compensation cost related to equity-based compensation for the year ended December 31, 2018 was $8,787. At December 31, 2018, the Fund had unrecognized compensation cost of $0 related to nonvested awards. The total fair value of awards vested and issued during the year ended December 31, 2018 was $395,931.

8. OFFICER AND DIRECTOR COMPENSATION

The aggregate remuneration paid by the Fund during the year ended December 31, 2018 to officers and directors amounted to $3,456,835, of which $624,817 was paid to independent directors. These amounts represent the taxable income to the Fund's officers and directors and, therefore, may differ from the amounts reported in the Statement of Operations that are recorded and expensed in accordance with GAAP. At December 31, 2018, $1,593,735 was due to officers and directors, representing amounts related to estimated cash compensation and estimated retirement plan discretionary contributions payable to officers, and reinvested dividend payments on restricted stock awards payable to directors.

9. PORTFOLIO SECURITIES LOANED

The Fund makes loans of securities to approved brokers to earn additional income. The loans are collateralized by cash and/or U.S. Treasury and government agency obligations valued at 102% of the value of the securities on loan. The market value of the loaned securities is calculated based upon the most recent closing prices and any additional required collateral is delivered to the Fund on the next business day. On loans collateralized by cash, the cash collateral is invested in a registered money market fund. The Fund accounts for securities lending transactions as secured financing and retains a portion of the income from lending fees and interest on the investment of cash collateral. The Fund also continues to receive dividends on the securities loaned. Gain or loss in the fair value of securities loaned that may occur during the term of the loan will be for the account of the Fund. At December 31, 2018, the Fund had no securities on loan. The Fund is indemnified by the custodian, serving as lending agent, for the loss of loaned securities and has the right under the lending agreement to recover the securities from the borrower on demand.

10. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

The Fund and its affiliated companies lease office space and equipment under operating lease agreements expiring at various dates through the year 2026. The Fund recognized rental expense of $116,139 in 2018, and its estimated portion of the minimum rental commitments are as follows:

2019	$ 111,875
2020	122,069
2021	123,364
2022	123,080
2023	125,938
Thereafter	295,116
Total	$ 901,442

In February 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board updated the guidance on accounting for leases. The updated guidance requires lessees to recognize assets and liabilities that arise from operating lease transactions. Fund management has evaluated the guidance and concluded that there is no impact to the Fund.

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Financial Highlights

	Year Ended December 31,				
	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Per Share Operating Performance					
Net asset value, beginning of year	$23.26	$24.02	$20.74	$27.56	$32.26
Net investment income	0.42	0.46	0.41	0.37	0.50
Net realized gain (loss) and change in unrealized appreciation	(4.77)	0.02	4.07	(5.80)	(3.23)
Change in accumulated other comprehensive income	—	—	—	0.05	(0.01)
Total from operations	(4.35)	0.48	4.48	(5.38)	(2.74)
Less distributions from:					
Net investment income	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.41)	(0.38)	(0.51)
Net realized gain	(0.40)	(0.72)	(0.73)	(1.00)	(1.38)
Return of capital	(0.32)	—	—	—	—
Total distributions	(1.17)	(1.18)	(1.14)	(1.38)	(1.89)
Capital share repurchases (note 5)	—	—	—	—	0.03
Reinvestment of distributions	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.10)
Total capital share transactions	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Net asset value, end of year	$17.71	$23.26	$24.02	$20.74	$27.56
Market price, end of year	$14.57	$19.84	$20.17	$17.74	$23.84
Total Investment Return *					
Based on market price	-21.4%	4.6%	20.2%	-20.0%	-6.3%
Based on net asset value	-18.5%	3.0%	22.5%	-19.1%	-8.0%
Ratios/Supplemental Data					
Net assets, end of year (in millions)	$523	$674	$686	$583	$755
Ratio of expenses to average net assets	0.79%	0.78%	0.82%	1.26%**	0.63%
Ratio of net investment income to average net assets	1.89%	2.05%	1.85%	1.49%**	1.53%
Portfolio turnover	47.0%	24.4%	19.0%	16.0%	19.6%
Number of shares outstanding at end of year (in 000's)	29,534	28,999	28,555	28,097	27,381

*
Total investment return assumes reinvestment of all distributions at the price received in the Fund's dividend reinvestment plan.

**
Ratios of expenses to average net assets was 0.86% after adjusting for non-recurring pension-related settlement charges. The adjusted ratio of net investment income to average net assets was 1.89%.

Schedule of Investments

December 31, 2018

Shares	Value (a)	&#82