



# **RiverPark Long/Short Opportunity Fund** (RLSIX / RLSFX)

#### **Third Quarter 2017 Performance Summary**

The third quarter of 2017, was a strong period of absolute and relative performance for the RiverPark Long/Short Opportunity Fund (the Fund). The Fund returned 5.1% for the quarter which compared well with the Morningstar L/S Equity Category, which returned 2.6%, and the broader market (as represented by the S&P 500 Index) which returned 4.5% during the quarter.

This brings our year to date 2017 total return to 19.5%.

	F	und Returns for the Period	Ending September 30, 201	7
	Institutional Shares (RLSIX)	Retail Shares (RLSFX)	Morningstar L/S Equity Category	S&P 500 (total return)
<b>Current Quarter</b>	5.10%	5.06%	2.56%	4.48%
Year To Date	19.52%	19.30%	6.95%	14.24%
One Year	20.21%	19.88%	8.69%	18.61%
Three Year Annualized	5.58%	5.38%	2.68%	10.81%
Five Year Annualized	4.25%	4.05%	4.65%	14.21%
ITD Annualized	7.20%	7.06%	3.70%	13.84%
ITD Cumulative	74.44%	72.61%	33.71%	182.08%

Annualized performance since inception of the Mutual Fund (3/30/2012) was 4.12% for RLSIX and 3.92% for RLSFX.

The performance quoted for periods prior to March 30, 2012 is that of RiverPark Opportunity Fund, LLC (the "Predecessor Fund"). The inception date of the Predecessor Fund was September 30, 2009. Although the Fund is managed in a materially equivalent manner to its predecessor, the Predecessor Fund was not a registered mutual fund and was not subject to the same investment and tax restrictions as the Fund. If the Predecessor Fund had been charged the same fees and expenses as the Fund, the annual returns for the Predecessor Fund would have been higher.Performance shown for periods of one year and greater are annualized.

Index performance returns do not reflect any management fees, transaction costs, or expenses. Indexes are unmanaged and one cannot invest directly in an Index. MorningstarL/S Equity Category Returns sourced from Morningstar Principia.

The performance quoted herein represents past performance. Past performance does not guarantee future results. The investment return and principal value of an investment will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost, and current performance may be higher or lower than the performance quoted. For performance data current to the most recent month end, please call 888.564.4517. Gross expense ratios, as of the prospectus dated 1/27/2017, for Institutional and Retail classes are 3.12% and 3.31%, respectively. Gross Expense Ratio does not reflect the ability of the adviser to recover all or a portion of prior waivers, which would result in higher expenses for the investor. Please reference the prospectus for additional information.



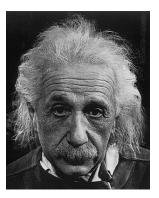
Our long book, once again, drove our overall performance for the quarter, contributing 6.4% to our performance. Our long returns were broad-based as 32 of our 41 holdings contributed positively to our results for the quarter. Although we took profits in several of our better performing holdings during the quarter, we continue to find the valuations throughout our long book attractive, as the fundamental earnings growth of most of our long positions have materially outperformed their stock prices over the past several years and our portfolio continues to be attractively valued. The quality of the businesses we own also remains exceptional: our portfolio continues to be dominated by market leading businesses in secular growth industries with high quality management teams, low levels of financial leverage, limited capital expenditures, and substantial excess free cash flow that is available to both reinvest in future growth and return to shareholders. As a result, although we reduced our exposure during the quarter, we maintained a greater than 100% exposure to our longs as of the end of the quarter (119% of capital down from 123% at the end of 2Q17 and 127% at the end of 1Q17).

Despite a strong overall market, our shorts detracted by only 0.7% during the quarter. Although substantially underperforming a strong market during the quarter (as they have year to date), many of the stocks in our short book still grinded higher and continue to outpace their earnings growth (which, for many of our shorts, is negative), increasing their valuations. Directly contrary to our long book, our short book is filled with what we believe to be below-average businesses that face significant secular challenges, struggle to grow revenue, often have levered balance sheets, require significant capital expenditures, and generate limited free cash flow. While we are encouraged by the market's appreciation for our longs during the first three quarters of 2017, we believe the market's enthusiasm for many of our shorts is unwarranted and that these businesses have substantial downside risk. As a result, we maintained an elevated short exposure for the Fund of nearly 62%.

With a portfolio full of what we believe to be compelling longs and shorts, our gross exposure remains at a relatively high level of 181% (down slightly from 187% at the end of 2Q) and near the high for our Fund since inception. We remain as optimistic as ever about the long-term return potential for the Fund as we begin the final quarter of 2017.



#### **Strategy Review**



## "Three great forces rule the world: Fear, Greed and Stupidity." Albert Einstein

Although it is unclear if Einstein made this comment specifically with the markets in mind, he did highlight three of the most important things we focus on in managing our portfolios.

Fear and Greed are ever present in the markets and the pendulum constantly swings back and forth between them to set the near-term price of each individual stock and the markets as a whole. While the pendulum generally spends most of its time closer to equilibrium, its swings back and forth between Fear and Greed can have a dramatic effect on the prices of securities over the short term.

While most insist that one should take Fear and Greed out of investing decisions, this seems to us both unrealistic (few of us are devoid of emotion) and ill advised. In fact, if properly managed, Fear and Greed can be an investor's two greatest allies. Greed (especially if redefined as something more palatable - such as "rational self-interest") is what drives us to look for investment opportunities rather than just put our money under the mattress. If the goal of investing is to compound our capital at an attractive rate (to create substantially more wealth in the future), then, when reward outweighs risk, "Greed is good"<sup>1</sup> and helps spur us to act. Fear is also essential. Fear helps us to avoid harm and reminds us to retreat to safety when the risks far outweigh the potential rewards. Fear and Greed thus counter-balance each other and if one can properly manage emotions - and also recognize the impact the emotions of others are having on the markets or the price of a given security – one should be able to generate attractive returns over the long term. As so eloquently stated by Warren Buffett, the goal is not to be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Stone, Oliver, director. Wall Street. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1987. Gordon Gekko.



emotionless but to be appropriately "greedy when others are fearful and fearful when others are greedy."

For the Fund, we mitigate our own emotions through a long term horizon and a disciplined investment process and we look to take advantage of situations where the Fear and Greed of others cause valuation anomalies that create attractive investment opportunities. These situations occur all the time, whether at points of overall market extremes or during periods when the market is fairly or fully valued.

It is with this balance of Fear and Greed in mind that we make several observations about the economy, the markets and our strategy as we close out the third quarter and enter the final months of 2017.

From a macro perspective:

• The market has been strong through the first nine months of the year. The S&P 500 is up 14.2% year to date as of the end of the third quarter as compared with the average annual return for the last 50 years of 9.7%.<sup>2</sup> This continues a strong run for equities since the end of the financial crisis in 2009 during which the markets have averaged impressive annual returns of 12.8%.<sup>3</sup> As usual, some sectors and companies have done extremely well this year (such as the technology sector which has increased 22% year to date) and others have struggled (the energy sector, for example, has declined 9% so far in 2017).<sup>4</sup> Although, the market's valuation has certainly expanded during this past eight years' advance (valuations troughed in early 2009 at about 9x forward earnings),<sup>5</sup> which some have cautioned indicates an absence of Fear, we note that the current forward PE ratio of the S&P 500 of about 17x is not particularly elevated by historical standards and the markets have performed both well and poorly in the one, three and five years following similar valuation levels in the past.<sup>6</sup> We also note that if you consider the market's current valuation in the context of today's historically low interest rate environment, the market valuation appears even more reasonable. This does not, to us at least, suggest excessive Greed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Source: Bloomberg, annualized total return of the S&P 500 from 1967-2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Source: Bloomberg, annualized total return of the S&P 500 from 2009-2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Source: Bloomberg, technology is represented by the Technology Select Sector SPDR Fund and energy by the Energy Select Sector SPDR Fund.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Source: Bloomberg.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The market's historical trough valuation periods have been about 7x earnings and the peak valuation periods have been around 30x earnings during the past 50 years. Source: https://marketintelligence.spglobal.com/blog/s-p-500-valuation-a-15x-to-16x-forward-price-earnings-valuation-looks-attractive.



- The US and global economies appear to be improving. US GDP growth in the second quarter was over 3%.<sup>7</sup> The European economy, while more sluggish, is also in its fourth year of recovery with growth improving.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, most of the past several years' fears of both an imminent recession and an impending correction/bear market now appear to have been off base. Most economists are now debating if we can sustain a 2.5% growth rate in the US for an extended period of time rather than whether a recession is likely in the next 12 months. This economic improvement has also been reflected in corporate earnings. While stock prices have expanded strongly over the past several years, corporate earnings have also grown (with that growth accelerating over the past three quarters) which has mitigated the valuation expansion from the market's strong run.<sup>9</sup> Importantly, while the economy and earnings are now in an upswing, inflation remains low in terms of both prices and wages and few believe that the economy is on the verge of overheating (which might prompt policy actions that could create a market sell-off).
- Interest rates remain quite low by historical standards in both the US and globally. While central bankers in many regions are focused on removing QE and beginning to raise their target benchmarks,<sup>10</sup>interest rates remain near all-time lows in the US (where the 10-year is at 2.3%) and are even lower in many of the world's other developed markets (for example, Germany (0.46%), Japan (0.07%), the UK (1.37%), France (0.74%) and Italy (2.11%) all have lower rates than those in the US). While rates may be biased incrementally higher, we believe they would have to rise substantially from current levels to alter what we perceive to be a very attractive backdrop for equity performance.
- While most measures of volatility are at or near all-time lows, we note that many stocks are still experiencing highly volatile short term movements in response to news flow and many market and media commentators are regularly opining that uncertainty reigns and disaster lurks just around the corner whether for the markets, individual companies or geo-politically.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/A191RL1Q225SBEA.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Source: European Commission Economic Forecasts: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-performance-and-forecasts/economic-forecasts\_en

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Source: Economic Research Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis <u>https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CP#0;</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> For example, the Fed has implemented three rate hikes over the past ten months moving the Fed Funds rate from a target of 0-0.25% at the end of 2008 to 1.00-1.25% after its most recent move in June of this year. Source: Federal Reserve Monetary Policy https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/openmarket.htm



Given all of the above, from a macro perspective, Fear and Greed seem to be in reasonable balance at this time.

With respect to our portfolio we would add several additional thoughts.

First, while the Fund has had a strong year-to-date (and trailing-twelve months) in which, as noted above, our Longs have driven our strong overall performance, in most cases, those gains have followed a 12-18 month period of underperformance in which our Longs underperformed both their earnings growth and the broader markets. For example, while some of the holdings in our Long book have experienced multiple expansion over the first 9 months of 2017 (and we have trimmed a handful of our best performing stocks this year including Realogy, CarMax, Apple, American Tower, Equinix, Priceline, Facebook, MasterCard, Adobe, and Align), several of our other holdings were under pressure during the year, giving us the opportunity to take advantage of what we perceive to be an unwarranted amount of Fear. We incrementally added to several of these including Southwestern Energy, Alliance Data Systems, Dollar Tree, Disney, Nike, and Chipotle, to name a few.

Similarly, while we have had several large wins on the short side this year (including Hibbett's, Dick's, Kroger, Discovery, Macy's, IBM and WPP), there are many holdings within our short book where the company's stocks have rallied materially despite what we believe to be a challenging outlook. These include Coach (up 15% for the year), The Gap (up 29%), Flex (up 17%), Best Buy (up 35%), Cogent (up 20%), and Iron Mountain (up 21%).

As a whole, we find the growth potential for our longs and the secular headwinds facing our shorts to remain firmly in place and the valuations across our portfolio to remain extremely attractive. As a result, we have maintained elevated exposures on both sides of our portfolio and we believe that we have struck a very attractive balance between Fear and Greed throughout the Fund that we believe positions us well for continued solid investment performance.

This brings us to Stupidity. Unlike Fear and Greed, the impact of Stupidity in investing is absolute – it is *always* something to avoid in your own actions and consider taking advantage of in the actions of others. While as compared to Einstein, we may all qualify as "Stupid", we consider "Stupidity" in the investing business to be acting out of excess emotion, a misplaced short-term focus or without doing one's own research (such as following the herd into momentum trades, sure bets, and the recommendations of others). For our portfolio, we avoid all of the above by focusing our efforts on in-depth fundamental company research and our investment process. At all times and in all markets, investing opportunities exist today that we will look at tomorrow and conclude – "the price of that security was stupid." Again, to quote Einstein, "Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe."



To us, first and foremost, we try to avoid stupidity by keeping a long term perspective with respect to our Long book. While short term trading often results in outcomes that are nothing better than a coin flip, lengthening one's time horizon is one of the surest ways to increase your likelihood of success when owning equities. As seen below, it's been rare for the S&P 500 to lose money over 10 years and a 20 year holding period has always resulted in positive returns.

S&P !	500 1926-2015 Retur	ns
Time Frame	Positive	<u>Negative</u>
Daily	54%	46%
Quarterly	68%	32%
One Year	74%	26%
5 Years	86%	14%
10 Years	94%	6%
20 Years	100%	0%

For the long side of our portfolios, we focus our research on businesses that we can own for the long term -5, 10 or, even better, 20 years - rather than try to trade stocks for the short term. Our investment strategy is thus predicated on predicting the long term earnings power of a company (by focusing our research on secular changes, company fundamentals and the quality of management) and not to attempt to time short term movements in the markets or individual securities.

For our short book, we use the same long-term perspective in our research and do not short stocks solely on the basis of either valuation or to hedge the market. We focus on businesses that we believe have material secular headwinds stifling their ability to grow and yet are fully valued by the market. These are businesses that we believe are losing competitive advantage, have eroding profit margins and declining capital returns due to long-term secular changes, have management teams that are failing to adapt (and often too focused on short term results) and have large market values in relation to the risks to their long-term profit potential. We also note that our short book is nearly always (and currently fully) comprised of short positions in individual securities of businesses (rather than index shorts). Rather than bet against the market, which has risen over time, we are investing against individual companies that we believe will underperform regardless of the direction of the overall market. We keep our short positions relatively small (our largest short is currently 2.4% as opposed to our largest long which is 5.7%) and often have slightly more shorts than longs in the portfolio at any one time. Thus, our short



portfolio is designed to create its own positive contribution to our returns while also allowing us to lever our long book, limit our overall market exposure, and protect capital in down markets.

Avoiding stupidity is also the foundation for our risk controls. We have a specific series of portfolio risk management tools with respect to the portfolio as a whole that we believe will help protect against any one mistake corrupting the balance of the portfolio. These tools include limiting our positions in individual companies at cost (7% for longs, 3% for shorts) and market (10% for longs and still 3% for shorts) and limiting our portfolio's exposure to any one theme (20% gross; 15% net) or industry (30% gross; 15% net).

By focusing our efforts on the long term earnings potential and the current valuations for each individual company in our long and our short book, and adhering strictly to these risk controls, we seek to always avoid Stupidity in our decision making. And, to the extent the market offers us an opportunity to own a fantastic business or short a struggling one at a "stupid" price, we are always looking to take advantage.

As the last quarter of 2017 begins, we remain as committed as ever to respecting Einstein's three great forces of Fear, Greed and Stupidity. We believe that our portfolio has struck an attractive balance between Fear and Greed, while our long-term investing horizon, disciplined investment approach and strict risk controls help us avoid Stupidity. We believe that if we remain disciplined in our focus and approach, our performance in the years to come has the potential to take advantage of another great Einstein quote - that the power of compounding is the eighth wonder of the world.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Albert Einstein - Compound Interest." Compound Interest - Albert Einstein - Quotes On Finance, www.quotesonfinance.com/quote/79/Albert-Einstein-Compound-interest.



#### **Portfolio Review**

The below charts depict the significant portfolio contributors and detractors during the most recent quarter.

Table ITop Contributors to Performance for the Quarter	Ended September 30, 2017
	Percent Impact
Dollar Tree, Inc. (long)	0.97%
CarMax, Inc. (long)	0.78%
Facebook, Inc. (long)	0.63%
Align Technology, Inc. (long)	0.57%
Mastercard Inc. (long)	0.55%

#### Table II

Top Detractors From Performance for the Quarter Ended September 30, 2017

	Percent Impact
Alliance Data Systems Corp. (long)	-0.56%
The Gap, Inc. (short)	-0.53%
Green Dot Corp. (short)	-0.40%
Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc. (long)	-0.35%
Pacira Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (long)	-0.34%

Portfolio Attribution is produced by RiverPark Advisors, LLC (RiverPark), the Fund's adviser, using the FactSet Research Systems Portfolio Analysis Application. Although RiverPark believes that the FactSet model adheres to generally accepted standards in the industry, attribution analysis is not an exact science and different methodologies may produce different results.

Performance Attribution is shown gross of fees. Holdings are subject to change.



We continue to believe that the secular themes represented in our long and short portfolio will continue to be among the primary contributors to the earnings growth and eventual stock price performance for our longs and earnings contraction and eventual stock price declines for our shorts. Below is a list of some of these themes represented in our portfolios as of the end of the quarter.

#### Long

- E-Commerce
- Internet Media
- Growth Retail
- Innovative Asset Managers
- Dollar Stores
- Online Brokers
- Medical Innovation
- Electronic Payments
- Financial Exchange
- Energy E&P
- Customer Loyalty/Measurement
- Cloud Computing
- Unique Media
- Wireless Towers
- International Gaming

### Short

- Apparel/Department Store Retail
- IT Hardware
- Big Box Retail
- Telecom Service Providers
- Advertising Agency
- REIT's
- Restaurants
- Dying Brands
- Legacy Consumer Electronics
- Internet Media/E-Commerce

This is a representative (non-exhaustive) list of our largest current long and short themes. Holdings subject to change.



## **Top Ten Holdings**

Below is a list of our top ten long holdings as of the end of the quarter:

Table VITop Ten Long Holdings as of September 30, 2	017
	Percent of Net Assets of the Fund
The Blackstone Group L.P.	5.7%
Facebook, Inc.	5.2%
Dollar Tree, Inc.	4.9%
Alphabet Inc.	4.7%
The Charles Schwab Corp.	4.4%
CarMax, Inc.	4.1%
Amazon.com, Inc.	4.1%
Alliance Data Systems Corp.	4.0%
Equinix, Inc.	3.9%
The Walt Disney Co.	<u>3.8%</u>
	44.8%

Holdings subject to change.

#### **Summary**

We continue to believe that our secular-themed long/short portfolio is well positioned to generate strong absolute and relative performance in the years to come. We will continue to keep you apprised of our process and portfolio holdings in these letters each quarter. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments about anything we have written or about any of our funds.

We thank you for your interest in the RiverPark Long/Short Opportunity Fund.

Sincerely,

Mitch Rubin Portfolio Manager and Co-Chief Investment Officer



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	Institutional Shares	Retail Shares	Morningstar L/S Equity	S&P 500 w/ Dividend	Fund Cor	Fund Contribution
Period	(RLSIX)	(RLSFX)	Category*	Performance	Long	Long Short
2009	1.7%	1.7%	1.3%	6.0%	5.7%	5.7% (3.6%)
2010	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%	15.1%	13.9%	13.9% (7.0%)
2011	8.5%	8.5%	(3.3%)	2.1%	3.8%	3.8% 6.9%
2012	18.9%	18.7%	3.6%	16.0%	26.6%	26.6% (5.5%)
2013	12.0%	11.9%	14.6%	32.4%	37.2%	37.2% (22.9%)
2014	(3.9%)	(4.1%)	2.8%	13.7%	6.0%	6.0% (7.8%)
2015	0.6%	0.4%	(2.2%)	1.4%	(1.9%)	(1.9%) 4.5%
2016	(1.7%)	(1.9%)	2.1%	12.0%	7.6%	7.6% (7.8%)
1Q 17	8.2%	8.2%	2.9%	6.1%	12.1%	12.1% (3.4%)
2Q 17	5.1%	5.0%	1.4%	3.1%	6.4%	6.4% (0.8%)
3Q 17	5.1%	5.1%	2.6%	4.5%	6.3%	6.3% (0.7%)
YTD 2017	19.5%	19.3%	7.0%	14.2%	26.3%	26.3% (5.0%)
1 Year	20.2%	19.9%	8.7%	18.6%	27.8%	27.8% (5.3%)
3 Year Cumulative	17.7%	17.0%	8.3%	36.1%	37.0%	37.0% (12.5%)
3 Year Annualized	5.6%	5.4%	2.7%	10.8%		
5 Year Cumulative	23.2%	22.0%	25.5%	94.4%	78.5%	78.5% (42.8%)
5 Year Annualized	4.3%	4.1%	4.7%	14.2%		
ITD Cumulative	74.4%	72.6%	33.7%	182.0%	174.7%	174.7% (70.6%)
ITD Annualized	7.2%	7.1%	3.7%	13.8%		

#### Performance and Exposure Report Through September 30, 2017

#### Annualized performance since inception of the Mutual Fund (3/30/2012) was 4.12% for RLSIX and 3.92% for RLSFX.

Prior to April 2012, the performance data quoted is that of the Predecessor fund. The Predecessor fund was not a registered mutual fund and was not subject to the same investment and tax restrictions as the Fund. Although the investment strategy employed by the Mutual Fund is materially similar to that of the representative performance, the representative performance does not represent historical performance of the Mutual Fund and is not necessarily indicative of future performance of the Mutual Fund. Fund performance of the Mutual Fund and is not necessarily indicative of future performance of the Mutual Fund performance is net of all fees and expenses, whereas fund contribution is gross of fund operating expenses and compounded monthly based on overall fund performance. Performance shown for periods of one year and greater are annualized. Effective April 2012, fund performance is calculated using the Institutional class shares (RLSIX). Predecessor fund inception: September 30, 2009.

\* Morningstar L/S Equity Category Returns sourced from Morningstar Principia. Monthly and quarterly performance available upon request.



To determine if this Fund is an appropriate investment for you, carefully consider the Fund's investment objectives, risk factors, charges, and expenses before investing. This and other information may be found in the Fund's summary or full prospectus, which may be obtained by calling 888.564.4517, or by visiting the website at www.riverparkfunds.com. Please read the prospectus carefully before investing.

Mutual fund investing involves risk including possible loss of principal. In addition to the normal risks associated with investing, international investments may involve risk of capital loss from unfavorable fluctuation in currency values, from differences in generally accepted accounting principles or from social, economic or political instability in other nations.

The use of leverage by the fund managers may accelerate the velocity of potential losses. Furthermore, the risk of loss from a short sale is unlimited because the Fund must purchase the shorted security at a higher price to complete the transaction and there is no upper limit for the security price. The use of options, swaps and derivatives by the Fund has the potential to significantly increase the Fund's volatility. There can be no assurance that the Fund will achieve its stated objectives.

This material represents the portfolio manager's opinion and is an assessment of the market environment at a specific time and is not intended to be a forecast of future events or a guarantee of future results. This information should not be relied upon by the reader as research or investment advice regarding the funds or any security in particular.

Standard and Poor's 500 Index is a capitalization-weighted index of 500 stocks. The index is designed to measure performance of the broad domestic economy through changes in the aggregate market value of 500 stocks representing all major industries.

Morningstar Long/Short Equity Category portfolios hold sizeable stakes in both long and short positions in equities and related derivatives. Some funds that fall into this category will shift their exposure to long and short positions depending on their macro outlook or the opportunities they uncover through bottomup research. Some funds may simply hedge long stock positions through exchange-traded funds or derivatives.

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