

# **VPI VALUE POOL**

# ANNUAL MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

# **MANAGER**

VALUE PARTNERS INVESTMENTS INC.

# PORTFOLIO MANAGER

PATIENT CAPITAL MANAGEMENT INC.

This annual management report of fund performance contains financial highlights but does not contain the complete annual financial statements of the Pool. If you have not received a copy of the annual financial statements with this annual management report of fund performance, you may obtain a copy at your request, and at no cost, by calling toll-free at 1-866-323-4235, by writing to us at 300-175 Hargrave Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 3R8, by visiting our website at www.valuepartnersinvest-ments.ca or by visiting the SEDAR website at www.sedar.com.

You may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the Pool's interim financial report, proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.

For the year ended December 31, 2017



VPI VALUE POOL

# **Annual Management Discussion of Fund Performance**

March 1, 2018

#### **Investment Objective and Strategies**

VPI Value Pool's objective is to provide unitholders with long-term growth while preserving capital. The Portfolio Manager seeks to achieve the objectives of the Pool by investing in a diversified, but concentrated, portfolio of North American and International-based equity securities.

The Portfolio Manager's investment philosophy is based on the preservation of capital and long-term growth. The Portfolio Manager invests in companies with a long history of operation in stable businesses that are easy to understand. An emphasis is placed on seeking out equity securities of high quality businesses that are trading at a substantial discount to intrinsic value and where there is an expectation of significant profit and dividend growth. In the absence of opportunities that meet its criteria, the Portfolio Manager may hold significant cash or short-term debt securities until appropriate investment opportunities become available.

#### Risk

Overall, the risks associated with investing in the Pool have not materially changed and remain as discussed in the prospectus. The Pool continues to be suitable for investors with a medium tolerance for risk. During the year, however, there have been external factors at play that have changed the prevalence of certain risks relative to others.

The Portfolio Manager views North American markets as vulnerable to a significant correction. The Portfolio Manager believes that U.S. and Canadian equity market valuations are substantially above long-term averages and thus vulnerable to a significant correction should valuations revert to their long-term averages. The Canadian economy posted strong growth and employment numbers in the latter half of 2017. Strength in manufacturing, the housing sector and a rebound in oil prices contributed to the economic strength. However, some concerns loom on the horizon. Continued high housing prices, historically high levels of consumer debt and burgeoning government debt are cause for concern. Canada also faces uncertainties and challenges as the United States starts to implement President Trump's agenda. The North American Free Trade Agreement is under negotiation and the tax reform in the U.S. threatens Canada's competitive position. The strengthening North American economy has led to a rise in interest rates by both the Federal Reserve and Bank of Canada. Rising interest rates, increasing inflation, political uncertainty in the U.S. and the threat of military action on the Korean Peninsula all pose significant risks to equity markets.

#### **Results of Operations**

Net assets of the Pool decreased by approximately \$17.4 million for the year ended December 31, 2017. This decrease consisted of a \$14.0 million decrease in net assets from operations and \$3.4 million of net redemptions. The decrease in net assets from operations can be attributed to \$14.6 million of unrealized depreciation in the value of investments and \$3.8 million in operating expenses offset by \$2.9 million due to dividend and interest income and \$1.5 million of net realized gains on the sale of investments during the year.

There were several changes made to the Pool's holdings which changed the allocation of the portfolio over the course of the year. The following table summarizes the businesses that were added or removed from the portfolio:

Additions	Dispositions
None	Bank of Montreal
	PrairieSky Royalty Ltd.

As a result of these changes, there were some shifts in the portfolio allocation from the prior year as indicated in the following table:

Sector	Allocation Increase	Sector	Allocation Decrease
Cash & Equivalents	4.2%	Retailing	1.9%
		Energy	1.2%
		Banks	0.6%
		Consumer Services	0.5%

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# **VPI VALUE POOL**

## **Results of Operations (continued)**

Each series of the Pool (excluding Series O), experienced losses in the range -5.7% to -6.8% for the year as compared to a 9.1% return for the S&P/TSX Composite Total Return Index and a 13.8% return for the S&P 500 Total Return Index (C\$). The Pool underperformed the S&P/TSX Composite Total Return Index due to the investments in the energy and retail sectors. Investors were concerned that oil prices would continue to remain at low levels. In addition, concerns arose regarding access to market over the delays in building pipelines in both Canada and the U.S. The Pool's investment in the retail sector was impacted by the concern that Amazon would dominate the retail landscape and reduce traditional retailer's long term earnings power. In addition, the Pool maintained a substantial cash balance during the year, as explained below. Performance was positively impacted by the investments in the financial sector. The Pool's holdings in Canadian banks benefitted from continued earnings and dividend growth throughout the year.

The Portfolio Manager will hold significant cash and short-term debt instruments in adverse market conditions while waiting for investment opportunities that meet its stringent criteria. As a result, the volatility of the Pool during periods in which the Pool is not fully-invested is generally expected to be less than the market experiences during the period. During the year, the Portfolio Manager maintained substantial cash balances as investment opportunities were limited due to high market valuations.

## **Revenues and Expenses**

Revenues of the Pool amounted to \$2.9 million, representing interest and dividend income from its holdings. The Pool also incurred \$3.8 million in management fees and operating expenses, realized a gain of \$1.5 million on the disposal of investments and experienced \$14.6 million in unrealized depreciation in the value of its investments during the year.

Realized gains on the sale of investments during the year are attributable to the following dispositions in the portfolio as referred to previously:

Holding	Approximate Holding Period	Proceeds (millions)	Cost (millions)	Realized Gain (millions)
Bank of Montreal	5.1 years	\$ 3.5	\$ 2.0	\$ 1.5
PrairieSky Royalty Ltd.	0.6 years	0.2	0.2	-
Canada Treasury Bills	n/a	652.2	652.2	-
		\$ 655.9	\$ 654.4	\$ 1.5

#### **Recent Developments**

**Economic Conditions** 

The U.S. economy performed extremely well during 2017. Employment figures reached record levels with the unemployment rate falling below four per cent for the first time in several years. As well, all of the significant economic statistics such as manufacturing growth, profits and consumer spending continued to build on the previous year's strong performance. This strong economic performance and heightened confidence was aided in part by President Trump's policies. Tax cuts, reduced regulation and a pro energy policy have had a positive impact on growth and confidence. These positive developments have raised concerns about rising inflation and interest rates. Despite President Trump's strong economic performance, the American political environment remains extremely rancorous and divided; especially with respect to the ongoing Russian collusion investigation. As a result, the potential for a political crisis affecting the equity markets is at elevated levels. Rising tensions with Iran and North Korea pose heightened geopolitical risks.

The Canadian economy performed better than expected in 2017. Improved manufacturing, a strong construction market and a rebound in commodity prices all contributed to the positive economic growth. However, the Canadian economy faces challenges due to rising interest rates, uncertainty over the North American Free Trade Agreement and the impact of reduced taxes in the United States.

#### Series O units

Effective July 2017, the Pool introduced a new Series of units; Series O. Series O units are available to investors who have, or whose dealers have, entered into an agreement directly with the Manager to purchase Series O units or who have opened a discretionary investment management account with the Manager.

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**VPI VALUE POOL** 

# **Summary of Investment Portfolio** As at December 31, 2017

Portfolio Allocation			
Cash & Equivalents	63.7%	US Equities	6.7%
Canadian Equities	29.6%		
Sector Allocation			
Cash & Equivalents	63.7%	Consumer Services	3.8%
Energy	23.0%	Retailing	2.9%
Banks	6.6%		

# **Top 25 Holdings**

Issuer	Maturity Date	Percentage of Net Assets
Canada Treasury Bills	08-Mar-18	62.7%
Canadian Natural Resources		8.4%
Encana Corporation		5.9%
Ensign Energy Services Inc.		4.7%
Cenovus Energy Inc.		4.0%
Speedway Motorsports Inc.		3.8%
Bank of Nova Scotia		3.6%
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce		3.0%
Bed Bath & Beyond		2.9%
Cash		1.0%
Total		100.0%

The above summary of investment portfolio may change due to ongoing portfolio transactions of the Pool. An update will be made available within 60 days of each subsequent quarter-end.

For the year ended December 31, 2017



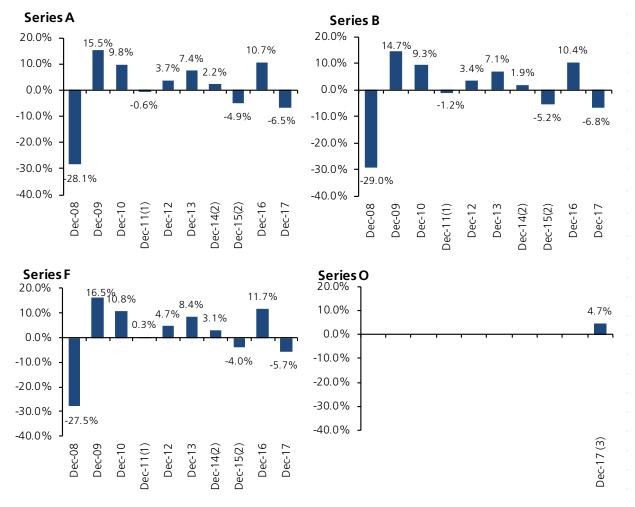
# **VPI VALUE POOL**

# **Past Performance**

The historical performance information shown below assumes that all distributions were reinvested in the Pool and does not account for any sales, redemptions, distributions or optional charges or income taxes payable by an investor that would have reduced returns. Mutual fund returns are not guaranteed, their values change frequently and past performance may not be repeated.

#### Year-by-Year Return

The bar charts below show the performance of each series of the Pool (net of fees) for the year ended December 31, 2017, and the previous years ended December 31 or since inception to December 31. It shows in percentage terms, how an investment made on January 1 or on inception would have increased or decreased by the end of the respective periods.



- (1) Patient Capital Management was appointed portfolio manager of the Pool on November 1, 2011.
- (2) The Pool was capped to new investments from June 30, 2014 to November 2, 2015.
- (3) 2017 return since inception on July 5, 2017.

For the year ended December 31, 2017



# **VPI VALUE POOL**

#### **Annual Compound Returns**

The following table shows the annual compound total return of each series of the Pool compared to the S&P/TSX Composite Index and the S&P 500 Index in Canadian dollar terms for the periods shown ended December 31, 2017. All index returns are calculated on a total return basis, meaning that performance was calculated under the assumption that all distributions were reinvested.

	10 Year	5 Year	3 Year	1 Year	Since Inception
Series A <sup>(1)</sup> (Inception: October 1, 2007)	0.1%	1.5%	-0.5%	-6.5%	0.2%
S&P/TSX Composite Index	4.7%	8.7%	6.6%	9.1%	4.4%
S&P 500 Index (C\$)	11.1%	21.2%	14.4%	13.8%	9.4%
Series B <sup>(1)</sup> (Inception: October 1, 2007)	-0.3%	1.3%	-0.8%	-6.8%	-0.3%
S&P/TSX Composite Index	4.7%	8.7%	6.6%	9.1%	4.4%
S&P 500 Index (C\$)	11.1%	21.2%	14.4%	13.8%	9.4%
Series F <sup>(1)</sup> (Inception: October 1, 2007)	1.1%	2.5%	0.4%	-5.7%	1.1%
S&P/TSX Composite Index	4.7%	8.7%	6.6%	9.1%	4.4%
S&P 500 Index (C\$)	11.1%	21.2%	14.4%	13.8%	9.4%
Series O <sup>(1)</sup> (Inception: July 5, 2017)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.7%
S&P/TSX Composite Index	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.3%
S&P 500 Index (C\$)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.5%

- (1) The percentage return differs for each series because the management fee rate and expenses differ for each series.
- (2) Patient Capital Management Inc. was appointed portfolio manager of the Pool on November 1, 2011.
- (3) The Pool was capped to new investments from June 30, 2014 to November 2, 2015.

The S&P/TSX Composite Index is a broad market indicator of activity for the Canadian equity market. Size and liquidity are among the key criteria for inclusion in the index, with size being assessed on a float market capitalization basis and liquidity being measured relative to liquidity thresholds. The S&P 500 Index has been widely regarded as the best single gauge of the large cap U.S. equities market since the index was first published in 1957. The index includes 500 leading companies in leading industries of the U.S. economy, capturing approximately 80% coverage of U.S. equities.

#### Management Fees

The Pool pays an annual management fee on each of its series to the Manager. The management fee is calculated daily as a percentage of the net asset value of each series as of the close of business on each business day. In consideration for the management fees, the Manager may pay a percentage sales commission and/or trailing commission to registered dealers or brokers for units bought and held in the Pool depending on which series of units were purchased. The Manager also pays a portion of the management fee to the Portfolio Manager for its services in managing the investment portfolio.

For the year ended December 31, 2017, approximately 41% of the management fee revenues received by the Manager from the Pool were paid to registered dealers and brokers as sales and/or trailing commissions. Since each series may have a different commission structure, this percentage may vary by series. For unitholders eligible for the Management Fee Reduction Program, approximately 15% of the gross management fees were returned to unitholders as management fee rebates. The remainder of the management fee revenue, after payment of fees to the Portfolio Manager for its services, was retained by the Manager for corporate purposes.

#### **Related Party Transactions**

Value Partners Investments Inc. is the manager ("Manager") of the Pool and is responsible for the overall business and operations of the Pool. For the year ended December 31, 2017, the Pool paid \$3.3 million in management fees (excluding taxes) to the Manager. In addition, the Manager or parent company of the Manager also held 40,224 Series F units and 1 Series O unit of the Pool as of December 31, 2017.

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# **VPI VALUE POOL**

# **Financial Highlights**

The following tables show selected key financial information about each series of the Pool and are intended to help you understand the Pool's financial performance for the past five years ended December 31. *This information is derived from the Pool's audited annual financial statements and is not intended to be a reconciliation of the net asset value per unit.* 

# The Pool's Net Assets Per Unit (\$) (1)

Series A	December 31 2017	December 31 2016	December 31 2015	December 31 2014	December 31 2013
Net assets, beginning of period	10.28	9.51	10.11	10.15	9.45
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.14	0.15	0.17	0.14	0.13
Total expenses	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.20)
Realized gains for the period	0.08	0.45	0.24	0.49	0.11
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period	(0.72)	0.62	(0.67)	(0.20)	0.62
Total increase (decrease) from operations <sup>(2)</sup>	(0.70)	1.02	(0.47)	0.21	0.66
Distributions:					
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	-	-	-	-	-
From dividends	-	-	-	-	-
From capital gains	-	(0.26)	(0.09)	(0.26)	-
Return of capital	-	-	-	=	-
Total annual distributions (3)	-	(0.26)	(0.09)	(0.26)	-
Net assets, end of period	9.60	10.28	9.51	10.11	10.15

Series B	December 31 2017	December 31 2016	December 31 2015	December 31 2014	December 31 2013
Net assets, beginning of period	10.01	9.23	9.73	9.75	9.11
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.13	0.15	0.16	0.13	0.12
Total expenses	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.22)
Realized gains for the period	0.09	0.39	0.24	0.47	0.11
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period	(0.76)	0.54	(0.62)	(0.19)	0.60
Total increase (decrease) from operations (2)	(0.76)	0.86	(0.45)	0.18	0.61
Distributions:					
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	-	-	-	-	-
From dividends	-	-	-	-	-
From capital gains	-	(0.18)	-	(0.21)	-
Return of capital	-	-	-	-	-
Total annual distributions (3)	-	(0.18)	-	(0.21)	-
Net assets, end of period	9.33	10.01	9.23	9.73	9.75





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# **Financial Highlights (continued)**

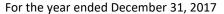
Series F	December 31 2017	December 31 2016	December 31 2015	December 31 2014	December 31 2013
Net assets, beginning of period	10.83	9.97	10.62	10.74	9.91
Increase (decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.15	0.17	0.18	0.14	0.13
Total expenses	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Realized gains for the period	0.06	0.50	0.23	0.50	0.11
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period	(0.72)	0.72	(0.71)	(0.20)	0.68
Total increase (decrease) from operations (2)	(0.63)	1.27	(0.42)	0.31	0.80
Distributions:					
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	-	-	-	-	-
From dividends	-	-	-	-	-
From capital gains	-	(0.31)	(0.22)	(0.45)	-
Return of capital	-	-	-	-	-
Total annual distributions (3)	-	(0.31)	(0.22)	(0.45)	-
Net assets, end of period	10.22	10.83	9.97	10.62	10.74

Series O <sup>(4)</sup>	December 31 2017	
Net assets, beginning of period <sup>(4)</sup>	10.00	
Increase (decrease) from operations:		
Total revenue	0.36	
Total expenses	(0.01)	
Realized gains for the period	-	
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period	(0.06)	
Total increase (decrease) from operations (2)	0.29	
Distributions:		
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	-	
From dividends	-	
From capital gains	-	
Return of capital	-	
Total annual distributions (3)	-	
Net assets, end of period	10.47	

<sup>(1)</sup> This information is derived from the Pool's audited annual financial statements.

<sup>(2)</sup> Net assets 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 period.

<sup>(3)</sup> Distributions were paid in cash/reinvested in additional units of the Pool, or both. (4) Inception date: July 5, 2017





## **VPI VALUE POOL**

**Ratios and Supplemental Data** 

Series A	December 31 2017	December 31 2016	December 31 2015	December 31 2014	December 31 2013
Total net asset value (000's) (1)	\$138,250	\$158,171	\$144,424	\$188,529	\$189,850
Number of units outstanding (000's) (1)	14,394	15,391	15,179	18,654	18,706
Management expense ratio (2)	2.06%	2.05%	2.05%	2.05%	2.07%
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions	2.06%	2.05%	2.05%	2.05%	2.07%
Trading expense ratio (3)	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.01%	0.01%
Portfolio turnover rate (4)	2.54%	10.45%	20.28%	26.22%	10.51%
Net asset value per unit (1)	\$9.60	\$10.28	\$9.51	\$10.11	\$10.15

Series B	December 31 2017	December 31 2016	December 31 2015	December 31 2014	December 31 2013
Total net asset value (000's) (1)	\$10,728	\$16,601	\$20,254	\$32,094	\$30,114
Number of units outstanding (000's) (1)	1,150	1,659	2,195	3,298	3,087
Management expense ratio (2)	2.32%	2.30%	2.29%	2.28%	2.29%
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions	2.32%	2.30%	2.29%	2.28%	2.29%
Trading expense ratio (3)	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.01%	0.01%
Portfolio turnover rate (4)	2.54%	10.45%	20.28%	26.22%	10.51%
Net asset value per unit (1)	\$9.33	\$10.01	\$9.23	\$9.73	\$9.75

Series F	December 31 2017	December 31 2016	December 31 2015	December 31 2014	December 31 2013
Total net asset value (000's) (1)	\$38,060	\$30,505	\$19,808	\$20,715	\$10,703
Number of units outstanding (000's) (1)	3,724	2,816	1,986	1,950	996
Management expense ratio (2) Management expense ratio before waivers or	1.14%	1.13%	1.13%	1.11%	1.11%
absorptions	1.14%	1.13%	1.13%	1.11%	1.11%
Trading expense ratio (3)	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.01%	0.01%
Portfolio turnover rate (4)	2.54%	10.45%	20.28%	26.22%	10.51%
Net asset value per unit (1)	\$10.22	\$10.83	\$9.97	\$10.62	\$10.74

Series O	December 31 2017	
Total net asset value (000's) (1)	\$785	
Number of units outstanding (000's) (1)	75	
Management expense ratio (2)	n/a	
Management expense ratio before waivers or		
absorptions	n/a	
Trading expense ratio (3)	0.00%	
Portfolio turnover rate (4)	2.54%	
Net asset value per unit (1)	\$10.47	

<sup>(1)</sup> This information is provided as at the date shown.

<sup>(2)</sup> Management expense ratio is based on total expenses for the stated period (excluding distributions, commissions and other portfolio transaction costs) and is expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net assets during the period. In the period a series is established, the management expense ratio is annualized from the date of inception to December 31.

<sup>(3)</sup> The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net assets during the period.

<sup>(4)</sup> The Pool's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the Pool's portfolio manager manages its portfolio investments. A portfolio turnover rate of 100% is equivalent to the Pool buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the year. The higher the Pool's portfolio turnover rate in a year, the greater the trading costs payable by the Pool 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 the performance of the Pool.

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#### **Other Information**

As at December 31, 2017, Value Partners Group Inc. (VPGI) owns 100 percent of the Manager. VPGI is 37.9 percent beneficially owned by The Longton Trust II, a discretionary family trust established for the benefit of specified members of the Lawton family, including one director/officer of the Manager. Certain of the directors, officers and shareholders of VPGI are also shareholders and sales representatives of Lawton Partners Financial Planning Services Limited, a mutual fund dealer.

As of December 31, 2017, sales representatives of Lawton Partners Financial Planning Services Limited hold, in aggregate, Class A1 shares of VPGI representing 15.9 percent of the common equity and Class C1 shares representing 6.3 percent of the common equity. The remaining common equity of VPGI was held by sales representatives of other dealer firms and employees of the Manager. No sales representative held more than 5 percent of the common equity of the Manager. Additional information regarding equity interests may be obtained from the Pool's annual information form or from the Manager's website at <a href="https://www.valuepartnersinvestments.ca">www.valuepartnersinvestments.ca</a>.

#### **Forward-Looking Statements**

This report may contain forward-looking statements about the Pool, including its strategy, expected performance and condition. Forward-looking statements include statements that are predictive in nature, that depend upon or refer to future events or conditions, or that include words such as "expects", "anticipates", "intends", "plans", "believes", "estimates", or negative versions thereof and similar expressions. In addition, any statement that may be made concerning future performance, strategies or prospects, and possible future Pool action, is also a forward-looking statement. Forward-looking statements are based on current expectations and projections about future events and are inherently subject to, among other things, risks, uncertainties and assumptions about the Pool and economic factors.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance, and actual events and results could differ materially from those expressed or implied in any forward-looking statements made by the Pool. Any number of important factors could contribute to these digressions, including, but not limited to, general economic, political and market factors in North America and internationally, interest and foreign exchange rates, global equity and capital markets, business competition, technological change, changes in government regulations, unexpected judicial or regulatory proceedings, and catastrophic events.

We stress that the above-mentioned list of important factors is not exhaustive. We encourage you to consider these and other factors carefully before making any investment decisions and we urge you to avoid placing undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Further, you should be aware of the fact that the Pool has no specific intention of updating any forward-looking statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.