

# MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE

# Harvest Canadian Equity Income Leaders ETF

December 31, 2022

The Fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure, can be obtained at your request, and at no cost, by calling us at 1-866-998-8298; by writing to us at Harvest Portfolios Group Inc., 610 Chartwell Road, Suite 204, Oakville, Ontario, L6J 4A5; by visiting our website at www.harvestportfolios.com; or on SEDAR at www.sedar.com.

# CORPORATE OVERVIEW

Harvest Portfolios Group Inc. ("Harvest" or the "Manager") is a Canadian Investment Manager founded in 2009. Harvest is focused on developing investment products that follow three investment criteria.

We (i) endeavor to develop investment products that are clear in their mandate and easy for investors to understand, (ii) strive to be transparent so that our investors can review their financial reports and know exactly what they own and (iii) seek to provide investors with consistent monthly or quarterly income by investing the fund portfolios in well managed companies that have a steady cash flow and dividend-paying history.

### INVESTMENT PRODUCT

The Harvest Canadian Equity Income Leaders ETF (the "Fund") invests in an equally weighted portfolio of Equity Securities<sup>1</sup> of 30 Canadian issuers chosen from the Canadian Equity Income Leaders Issuers' Investable Universe<sup>1</sup> that, immediately following each quarterly reconstitution, rank in the top 30 issuers as measured by market capitalization on an equally weighted basis (in Canadian dollars based on the most recent month end value).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> As defined in the Fund's prospectus dated June 6, 2022.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Unitholder letter March 2023

#### Dear Valued Investor,

Thank you for taking the time to read about Harvest ETFs & Funds in 2022 and our look ahead to 2023.

The past year reminded us of key lessons as investors, advisors, and fund managers. At Harvest Portfolios Group Inc., we were reminded of the importance of our core philosophy for wealth creation and preservation: own great businesses, hold them for the long-term, and generate steady income.

2022 saw central banks hiking key interest rates higher and faster than we, and many others, expected. These were among the highest and fastest rate increases in modern history, driven largely by central banks' goal to tame high and persistent inflation.

It was also a year of high volatility. Interest rate increases played a role, as did geopolitical instability and global economic uncertainty.

In an environment of persistent inflation, rising rates and high volatility, our focus on leading businesses and selling covered call options remained highly effective. Our Equity Income ETFs' defensive characteristics and ability to monetize volatility to generate high yields proved attractive in a turbulent year.

With bonds and equities both underperforming, the reliability of attractive income became a key component of total returns for many investors.

Even as investors have found success with our strategies, there is still a great deal of uncertainty around markets. The U.S. Federal Reserve claims they are trying to combat inflation without pushing the economy into recession. History shows that goal is very rarely achieved, but perhaps lightening up on the brakes early in 2023 could achieve the desired results.

We know that these rate increases will plateau at some point, and we believe we are nearing the end of that cycle. When that time comes, markets will react appropriately and likely move higher. We expect that 2023 will finish positive as rate hikes end and markets process these changes in the economy.

Markets are forward looking indicators, and the economic impact of rate increases are often delayed. This generally means markets recover and begin a growth trajectory before their underlying economies do.

As optimists and believers in the longer-term value of great businesses, we will continue to do what we always have at Harvest. We construct ETFs that hold solid businesses in their sector and use active & flexible covered call strategies to generate income where appropriate. We do that because we believe owning great businesses in the long-term is the best way to build and preserve wealth.

On behalf of Harvest, I would like to thank you for your continued trust and investment in our products.

Sincerely,

Signed "Michael Kovacs"

Michael Kovacs

Founder President and Chief Executive Officer



### MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION OF FUND PERFORMANCE

The annual management report of fund performance contains financial highlights but does not contain the complete annual financial statements of the Fund. For your reference, the annual financial statements of the Fund are attached to the annual management report of fund performance. You may obtain additional copies of these documents at your request, and at no cost, by calling toll free at 1(866) 998-8298; by writing to us at Harvest Portfolios Group Inc., 610 Chartwell Road, Suite 204, Oakville, Ontario, L6J 4A5; or by visiting our website at www.harvestportfolios.com; or on SEDAR at www.sedar.com.

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

#### INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

The Fund's investment objective is to provide unitholders with (i) monthly cash distributions; (ii) the opportunity for capital appreciation; and (iii) lower overall volatility of portfolio returns than would otherwise be experienced by owning Equity Securities of the Canadian Equity Income Issuers<sup>1</sup> directly.

In order to achieve its investment objectives, the Fund will invest in an equally weighted portfolio of Equity Securities of 30 Canadian issuers chosen from the Canadian Equity Income Leaders Issuers' Investable Universe that, immediately following each quarterly reconstitution, rank in the top 30 issuers as measured by market capitalization on an equally weighted basis (in Canadian dollars based on the most recent month end value) and that have call options available that, in the determination of the Manager, have sufficient liquidity to meet the Fund's investment objectives. If, in the opinion of the Manager, there are not 30 Canadian Equity Income Issuers that meet the investment criteria of the Fund, the Manager may invest in fewer than 30 Canadian Equity Income Issuers.

#### RISK

The risks associated with investing in the Fund are as described in the prospectus. There were no material changes to the Fund over the period that affected the overall level of risk of the Fund.

#### **RESULTS OF OPERATIONS**

The Fund began trading following the listing of its units on June 13, 2022 consisting of 100,000 units of Series A units at \$10.00 for proceeds of \$1,000,000. Performance information is not available for periods less than one year.

During the back half of 2022, after the Fund launch, Canadian equity markets were effectively directionless, still absorbing the aftershocks of the sharply negative downside in the first half of the year, on very high inflation impacts, rapidly rising interest rates, and weak sentiment. Each economic datapoint has been closely watched along with commentary coming from central bankers around the hiking cycle and when it will come to an end, and whether/how deep of an impact this will have on the economy. Market expectations for 2023 were at some of the widest divergence in many years, creating these directionless markets and increased volatility writing opportunities.

The Fund was invested in a portfolio of 30 Canadian Equity Income Issuers selected from a diverse universe of companies that are listed on recognized Canadian stock exchanges. The portfolio is equally weighted and follows a systematic process in selecting the top 30 largest Canadian Equity Income Issuers measured by market capitalization that meet specific dividend characteristics from the Canadian Equity Income Leaders Issuer's Investable Universe. The Fund used covered calls to generate additional income.

#### **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

The spread of the coronavirus ("COVID-19") over the last couple of years has had a significant impact on the global economy. Although COVID-19 continues to exist, most countries have largely lifted COVID-19 related restrictions and the world has returned to a more normal level of activity. The lasting impact of COVID-19 has been significant supply chain issues which have begun to subside however persist in some industries, and a significant rise in inflation. Inflationary pressures have been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and continue to impact global commodity supplies and costs. Central banks globally have quickly raised interest rates to address inflation although increasing the likelihood for a global recession. The above factors continue to impact global economies and financial markets, and uncertainty of the impact on financial performance of the Fund's investments persists. The Fund's future investment results may be materially adversely affected as a result.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> As defined in the Fund's prospectus dated June 6, 2022.



# **RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

There were no related party transactions during the reporting period, except for management fees and other expense reimbursements paid to Harvest, as noted below in Management and Other Fees.

### MANAGEMENT AND OTHER FEES

Harvest Portfolios Group Inc. is the Manager of the Fund and is responsible for managing the Fund's overall business and operations and provides key management personnel to the Fund. The Fund pays the Manager an annual management fee of 0.65%, plus applicable taxes, based on a percentage of the average daily net asset value ("NAV") of the Fund.

#### **Operating expenses**

The Fund is responsible for operating expenses relating to the carrying on of its business, including custodial services, interest, taxes, legal, audit fees, transfer agency services relating to the issue and redemption of units, and the cost of financial and other reports, costs and expenses for the Fund's Independent Review Committee ("IRC"), including fees and expenses of the IRC members and compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies. The Manager pays for such expenses on behalf of the Fund, except for certain expenses such as interest, and is then reimbursed by the Fund.

#### Other expenses

The Manager will be reimbursed by the Fund for all reasonable costs, expenses and liabilities incurred by the Manager for performance of services on behalf of the Fund in connection with the discharge by the Manager of its duties hereunder. Such costs and expenses may include, without limitation: mailing and printing expenses for reports to unitholders and other unitholder communications; a reasonable allocation of salaries and benefits; and other administrative expenses and costs incurred in connection with the Fund's continuous public offering and other obligations. These expenses are allocated by the Manager on a reasonable basis, across all the Harvest Portfolios Group Inc. funds, and series of each applicable fund. These expenses were \$5,353 for the period ended December 31, 2022 and are included in the unitholder reporting costs on the Statement of Comprehensive Income (Loss) in the financial statements.

#### Waivers and absorptions

At its sole discretion, the Manager may waive management fees or absorb expenses of the Fund. There were no management fee waivers for the period ended December 31, 2022. The Manager absorbed \$54,741 of expenses of the Fund for the period ended December 31, 2022. The Manager may cease doing so at any time without notice to unitholders. The management expense ratios of the Fund with and without the waivers and absorptions are reported in the Ratios and Supplemental Data table below.

### **RECOMMENDATION OR REPORTS BY THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The Independent Review Committee tabled no special reports and made no extraordinary material recommendations to management of the Fund during the period ended December 31, 2022.



### **FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

The following tables present selected key financial information about the Fund and are intended to help you understand the Fund's financial performance for the period ended December 31, 2022. This information is derived from the Fund's annual financial statements.

THE FUND'S NET ASSETS PER UNIT	2022
Net assets – beginning of period <sup>2</sup>	\$ 10.00
Increase (decrease) from operations	
Total revenue	0.27
Total expenses	(0.05)
Realized gains (losses) for the period	0.11
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period	(0.41)
Total increase (decrease) from operations <sup>1</sup>	\$ (0.08)
Distributions <sup>3</sup>	
From dividends	(0.10)
Return of capital	(0.25)
Total annual distributions <sup>3</sup>	\$ (0.35)
Net assets – end of period <sup>1</sup>	\$ 8.91

RATIOS AND SUPPLEMENTAL	
DATA	2022
Total net asset value	\$ 66,828,195
Number of units outstanding	7,500,000
Management expense ratio <sup>4</sup>	0.79%
Management expense ratio before	
waivers or absorptions <sup>4</sup>	1.03%
Trading expense ratio <sup>5</sup>	0.43%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>6</sup>	47.43%
Net asset value per unit	\$ 8.91
Closing market price (HLIF)	\$ 8.91

#### **Explanatory Notes:**

- 1. 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 reporting period. It is not intended that the Fund's net assets per unit table act as a continuity of opening and closing net assets per unit.
- 2. Net assets, at the commencement of operations on June 8, 2022 was \$10.00.
- 3. Distributions were paid in cash or reinvested in additional units of the Fund. The Fund may pay additional year end distributions in the form of reinvested units that are subsequently consolidated. There is no impact on NAV per unit, however such reinvested distributions increase the cost base of units held.
- 4. Management expense ratio ("MER") is based on total expenses (excluding commissions and other portfolio transaction costs) of the stated period and is expressed as an annualized percentage of the daily average net asset value during the period.
- 5. The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period.
- 6. The Fund's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the Fund's portfolio advisor manages its portfolio investments. A portfolio turnover of 100% is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the period. The higher a Fund's portfolio turnover rate, the greater the trading costs payable by the Fund and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the performance of a Fund.



#### **Past Performance**

The performance information presented herein assumes all dividends of the Fund during the periods presented were reinvested in additional securities of the Fund. The performance information does not take into account sales, redemptions, or other charges that would have reduced returns or affected performance. Past performance of the Fund is not necessarily indicative of how it will perform in the future.

### YEAR-BY-YEAR RETURNS

The Fund's performance is not shown as National Instument 81-106, the regulatory guideline for Continuous Disclosure, does not permit reporting of performance for any investment fund that has been in existence less than one year.

### ANNUAL COMPOUND RETURNS

The Fund's performance is not shown as National Instument 81-106, the regulatory guideline for Continuous Disclosure, does not permit reporting of performance for any investment fund that has been in existence less than one year.



# SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

The major portfolio categories and top holdings of the Fund at the end of the period are indicated in the following tables. A detailed breakdown of the Fund's holdings is available in the "Schedule of Investments" section of the Fund's annual financial statements.

# As at December 31, 2022

Top 25 Holdings	% of Net Asset Value		
Whitecap Resources Inc.	3.6		
Quebecor Inc., Class B	3.5		
Suncor Energy Inc.	3.4		
Great-West Lifeco Inc.	3.4		
Canadian Natural Resources Limited	3.4		
Bank of Montreal	3.4		
Keyera Corp.	3.4		
Pembina Pipeline Corporation	3.4		
BCE Inc.	3.3		
The Bank of Nova Scotia	3.3		
The Toronto-Dominion Bank	3.3		
AltaGas Ltd.	3.3		
Manulife Financial Corporation	3.3		
RioCan Real Estate Investment Trust	3.3		
IGM Financial Inc.	3.3		
Enbridge Inc.	3.3		
Sun Life Financial Inc.	3.3		
Emera Incorporated	3.3		
Royal Bank of Canada	3.3		
Fortis Inc.	3.3		
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	3.3		
National Bank of Canada	3.2		
Choice Properties Real Estate Investment Trust	3.2		
Canadian Utilities Limited, Class A	3.2		
Power Corporation of Canada	3.2		
Total	83.2		

This summary of investment portfolio may change due to the ongoing portfolio transactions of the Fund. Quarterly updates of the Fund's investment portfolio are available from Harvest Portfolios Group Inc. at <u>www.harvestportfolios.com</u>.



# SECTOR ALLOCATION

Sector	% of Net Asset Value
Financials	36.3
Energy	23.7
Utilities	16.0
Communication Services	10.0
Real Estate	6.5
Materials	3.2
Consumer Discretionary	3.1
Cash and other assets and liabilities	1.7
Options	(0.5)
Total	100.0





# **Head Office**

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# CAUTION REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This document may contain forward-looking statements relating to anticipated future events, results, circumstances, performance or expectations that are not historical facts but instead represent our beliefs regarding future events. By their nature, forward-looking statements require us to make assumptions and are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties. There is significant risk that predictions and other forward-looking statements will not prove to be accurate. We caution readers of this document not to place undue reliance on our forward-looking statements as a number of factors could cause actual future results, conditions, actions or events to differ materially from the targets, expectations, estimates or intentions expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from management expectations as projected in such forward-looking statements for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to market and general economic conditions, interest rates, regulatory and statutory developments, the effects of competition in the geographic and business areas in which the Fund may invest and the risks detailed from time to time in the Fund's prospectus or offering memorandum. We caution that the foregoing list of factors is not exhaustive and that when relying on forward-looking statements to make decisions with respect to investing in the Fund, investors and others should carefully consider these factors, as well as other uncertainties and potential events, and the inherent uncertainty of forward-looking statements. Due to the potential impact of these factors, the Fund does not undertake, and specifically disclaims, any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, unless required by applicable law.

