

# NORTHERN FUNDS

## U.S. Quality ESG Fund



Summary Prospectus | July 31, 2020

Ticker: Class K—NUESX, Class I—NUEIX

Before you invest, you may want to review the Fund's complete Prospectus, which contains more information about the Fund and its risks. You can find the Fund's complete Prospectus and other information about the Fund online at [northerntrust.com/prospectus](http://northerntrust.com/prospectus). You can also get this information at no cost by calling 800-595-9111 or by sending an e-mail request to [northern-funds@ntrs.com](mailto:northern-funds@ntrs.com). If you purchase shares of the Fund through a financial intermediary (such as a bank or a broker-dealer), the complete Prospectus and other information are also available from your financial intermediary. The Fund's complete Prospectus and Statement of Additional Information, both dated July 31, 2020, as supplemented, are incorporated by reference into this summary prospectus and may be obtained, free of charge, at the website, phone number or e-mail address noted above.

Beginning on January 1, 2021, as permitted by regulations adopted by the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"), paper copies of Northern Funds shareholder reports will no longer be sent by mail, unless you specifically request paper copies of the reports from Northern Funds or from your financial intermediary, such as a broker-dealer or bank. Instead, the reports will be made available on the Funds' website ([northerntrust.com/funds](http://northerntrust.com/funds)) and you will be notified by mail each time a report is posted and provided with a website link to access the report.

If you have already elected to receive your shareholder reports electronically, you will not be affected by this change and you need not take any action. You may elect to receive shareholder reports and other communications from Northern Funds electronically at any time by contacting your financial intermediary (such as a broker-dealer or bank) or, if your account is held directly with Northern Funds, by calling the Northern Funds Center at 800-595-9111 or by sending an e-mail request to: [northern-funds@ntrs.com](mailto:northern-funds@ntrs.com).

You may elect to receive all future reports in paper free of charge. If you invest through a financial intermediary, please contact your financial intermediary to continue receiving paper copies of your shareholder reports. If you invest directly with Northern Funds, you can inform Northern Funds that you wish to continue receiving paper copies of your shareholder reports by calling the Northern Funds Center at 800-595-9111 or by sending an e-mail request to: [northern-funds@ntrs.com](mailto:northern-funds@ntrs.com). Your election to receive reports in paper will apply to all Northern Funds you hold in your account at the financial intermediary or through an account with Northern Funds. You must provide separate instructions to each of your financial intermediaries.

### INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE

The Fund seeks to provide long-term capital appreciation. Any income received is incidental to this objective.

### FEES AND EXPENSES OF THE FUND

This table describes the fees and expenses that you may pay if you buy and hold Class I shares or Class K shares of the Fund.

#### Shareholder Fees (fees paid directly from your investment)

None

#### Annual Fund Operating Expenses (expenses that you pay each year as a percentage of the value of your investment)

	Class K <sup>(1)</sup>	Class I <sup>(1)</sup>
Management Fees	0.37%	0.37%
Other Expenses <sup>(2)</sup>	0.18%	0.28%
Transfer Agent Fees	0.04%	0.04%
Service Fees	None	0.10%
Other Operating Expenses	0.14%	0.14%
<b>Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses</b>	<b>0.55%</b>	<b>0.65%</b>
Expense Reimbursement <sup>(3)</sup>	(0.16)%	(0.16)%
<b>Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses After Expense Reimbursement</b>	<b>0.39%</b>	<b>0.49%</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> Expenses have been restated to reflect current fees.

<sup>(2)</sup> "Other Expenses" are based on estimated amounts for the current fiscal year.

<sup>(3)</sup> Northern Trust Investments, Inc. ("NTI" or the "Investment Adviser") has contractually agreed to reimburse a portion of the operating expenses of the Fund (other than certain excepted expenses, i.e., service fees and extraordinary expenses) to the extent the "Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses" exceed 0.39%. The "Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses After Expense Reimbursement" may be higher than the contractual limitation as a result of certain Fund expenses, including but not limited to service fees, that are not reimbursed. This contractual limitation may not be terminated before July 31, 2021 without the approval of the Board of Trustees.

### EXAMPLE

The following Example is intended to help you compare the cost of investing in Class K shares and Class I shares of the Fund with the cost of investing in other mutual funds. The Example assumes that you invest \$10,000 in the Fund for the time periods indicated and then redeem all of your Class K shares or Class I shares at the end of those periods. The Example also assumes that your investment has a 5% return each year and that the Fund's operating expenses remain the same. Although your actual costs may be higher or lower, based on these assumptions your costs would be:

	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years	10 Years
Class K	\$40	\$160	\$291	\$674
Class I	\$50	\$192	\$346	\$795

**PORTFOLIO TURNOVER.** The Fund pays transaction costs, such as commissions, when it buys and sells securities (or "turns over" its portfolio). A higher portfolio turnover rate may indicate higher transaction costs and may result in higher taxes when Fund shares are held in a taxable account. These costs, which are not reflected in annual portfolio operating expenses or in the Example, affect the Fund's performance. During the most recent fiscal year, the Fund's portfolio turnover rate was 19.16% of the average value of its portfolio.

### PRINCIPAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

In seeking long-term capital appreciation, the Fund will invest, under normal circumstances, at least 80% of its net assets (plus borrowings for investment purposes) in equity securities of large and mid-capitalization U.S. companies that NTI believes have favorable environmental, social and governance ("ESG") characteristics under a third-party vendor's rating methodology. For purposes of this definition, U.S. companies with a market capitalization within the range of the Russell 1000® Index will be considered large or mid-capitalization U.S. companies. As of

May 31, 2020, the market capitalization of the companies in the Russell 1000® Index was between approximately \$127.1 million and \$1.4 trillion.

Using a quantitative, factor based approach, the Fund intends to invest in companies that: (i) meet certain criteria for ESG factors as provided by a third-party research vendor; (ii) exhibit strong business fundamentals, solid management and reliable cash flows; and (iii) are located, headquartered in, incorporated in or otherwise organized in the United States. The Fund expects its investments to be allocated among companies that are diversified in terms of industries and capitalization ranges.

The Fund is managed according to a quantitative model developed by NTI. To define an investable universe, NTI excludes securities of companies involved in ESG controversies or those that violate global norms like the United Nations Global Compact. NTI also removes companies that do a poor job of managing their ESG risks and opportunities relative to their peers as well as those with material involvement in controversial business practices, including, but not limited to, tobacco and civilian firearms.

NTI engages a third-party research vendor to provide ESG data for U.S. companies. The third-party vendor identifies ESG areas of risk and opportunity, evaluates exposure and management, and ranks and rates companies against their industry peers.

After defining the investable universe, NTI evaluates the quality of the remaining securities and removes those securities that do not meet the proprietary quality methodology. NTI's quality methodology rates securities based on three categories of financial signals (profitability, management efficiency, and cash generation).

The Fund is constructed based on an optimization methodology designed to take active exposure by overweighting and underweighting securities based on their ESG and relative financial quality rankings. NTI also performs a risk management analysis in which risk exposures are measured and managed on the security, sector and portfolio levels. NTI makes final purchase decisions based on the quantitative model described above and on a desired level of diversification. The Fund will normally sell a security that NTI believes is no longer attractive based upon the evaluation criteria described above. As part of the optimization approach, risks such as sector and style tilt are managed. Further, the carbon footprint of the portfolio is reduced relative to the companies in the benchmark Russell 1000 Index. The Fund may use derivatives such as stock index futures to equitize cash and enhance portfolio liquidity.

*Frank Russell Company does not endorse any of the securities in the Russell 1000 Index. It is not a sponsor of the U.S. Quality ESG Fund and is not affiliated with the Fund in any way.*

## PRINCIPAL RISKS

As with any investment, you could lose all or part of your investment in the Fund, and the Fund's performance could trail that of other investments. The Fund is subject to certain risks, including the principal risks noted below, any of which may adversely affect the Fund's net asset value ("NAV"), total return and ability to meet its investment objective. Each risk noted below is considered a principal risk of investing in the Fund, regardless of the order in which it appears. The significance of each risk factor below may change over time and you should review each risk factor carefully.

**MARKET RISK** is the risk that the value of the Fund's investments may increase or decrease in response to expected, real or perceived economic, political or financial events in the U.S. or global markets. The frequency and magnitude of such changes in value cannot be predicted. Certain securities and other investments held by the Fund may experience increased volatility, illiquidity, or other potentially adverse effects in response to changing market conditions, inflation, changes in interest rates, lack of liquidity in the bond or equity markets, volatility in the equity markets, market disruptions caused by local or regional events such as war, act of terrorism, the spread of infectious illness (including epidemics and pandemics) or other public health issues, recessions or other events or adverse investor sentiment or other political regulatory, economic and social developments, and developments that impact specific economic sectors, industries or segments of the market. These risks may be magnified if certain events or developments adversely interrupt the global supply chain; in these and other circumstances, such risks might affect companies worldwide due to increasingly interconnected global economies and financial markets. Market risk includes the risk that a particular style of investing, such as growth or value, may underperform the market generally.

**ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE INVESTING RISK** is the risk stemming from the ESG factors that the Fund applies in selecting securities. The Fund intends to invest in companies with measurable high ESG ratings relative to their sector peers, and screen out particular companies that do not meet its ESG criteria. This may affect the Fund's exposure to certain companies or industries and cause the Fund to forego certain investment opportunities. The Fund's results may be lower than other funds that do not seek to invest in companies based on ESG ratings and/or screen out certain companies or industries. The Fund seeks to identify companies that it believes may have a societal impact outcome, but investors may differ in their views of what constitutes positive or negative societal impact outcomes. As a result, the Fund may invest in companies that do not reflect the beliefs and values of any particular investor.

- **REGULATORY RISK** is the risk that changes in government regulation of the financial markets may adversely affect the value of a security.

**LARGE CAP STOCK RISK** is the risk that large-capitalization stocks as a group could fall out of favor with the market, causing the Fund to underperform investments that focus solely on small- or medium-capitalization stocks. In addition, larger companies may grow more slowly or be slower to respond to business developments than smaller companies.

**QUANTITATIVE INVESTING RISK** is the risk that the value of securities or other investments selected using quantitative analysis can perform differently from the market as a whole or from their expected performance and the Fund may realize a loss. This may be as a result of the factors used in building a multifactor quantitative model, the weights placed on each factor, the accuracy of historical data supplied by third parties, and changing sources of market returns. Whenever a model is used, there is also a risk that the model will not work as planned.

**MANAGEMENT RISK** is the risk that a strategy used by the Fund's investment adviser may fail to produce the intended results or that imperfections, errors or limitations in the tools and data used by the investment adviser may cause unintended results. Management risk includes the risk that the quantitative model used by the Fund's investment adviser may not perform as expected, particularly in volatile markets.

**SECTOR RISK** is the risk that companies in similar businesses may be similarly affected by particular economic or market events, which may, in certain circumstances, cause the value of securities of all companies in a particular sector of the market to decrease. While the Fund may not concentrate in any one industry, the Fund may invest without limitation in a particular market sector.

- **TECHNOLOGY SECURITIES RISK** is the risk that securities of technology companies may be subject to greater price volatility than securities of companies in other sectors. These securities may fall in and out of favor with investors rapidly, which may cause sudden selling and dramatically lower market prices. Technology securities also may be affected adversely by changes in technology, consumer and business purchasing patterns, government regulation and/or obsolete products or services.

**CYBERSECURITY RISK** is the risk of an unauthorized breach and access to Fund assets, Fund or customer data (including private shareholder information), or proprietary information, or the risk of an incident occurring that causes the Fund, the investment adviser, custodian, transfer agent, distributor and other service providers and financial intermediaries to suffer data breaches, data corruption or lose operational functionality or prevent Fund investors from purchasing, redeeming or exchanging shares or receiving distributions. The Fund and its investment adviser have limited ability to prevent or mitigate cybersecurity incidents affecting third party service providers, and such third-party service providers may have limited indemnification obligations to the Fund or its investment adviser. Successful cyber-attacks or other cyber-failures or events affecting the Fund or its service providers may adversely impact and cause financial losses to the Fund or its shareholders. Issuers of securities in which the Fund invests are also subject to cybersecurity risks, and the value of these securities could decline if the issuers experience cyber-attacks or other cyber-failures.

**LARGE SHAREHOLDER RISK** is the risk that the Fund may experience adverse effects when certain large shareholders, including funds or accounts over which the Fund's investment adviser or an affiliate of the investment adviser has investment discretion, purchase or redeem large amounts of shares of the Fund. Such large shareholder redemptions, which may occur rapidly and unexpectedly, may cause the Fund to sell its securities at times it would not otherwise do so, which may negatively impact its liquidity and/or NAV. Such sales may also accelerate the realization of taxable income to shareholders if these sales result in gains, and may also increase transaction costs. In addition, large redemptions could lead to an increase in the Fund's expense ratio due to expenses being allocated over a smaller asset base. Large purchases of the Fund's shares may also adversely affect the Fund's performance to the extent that the Fund is delayed in investing new cash or otherwise maintains a larger cash position than it ordinarily would.

**STOCK INDEX FUTURES RISK** is the risk arising from the Fund's use of futures and includes: the risk that there will be imperfect correlation between the change in market value of the Fund's securities and the price of futures contracts; the possible inability of the Fund to close a futures contract when desired; losses due to unanticipated market movements, which potentially are unlimited; and the possible inability of the Fund's investment adviser to correctly predict the direction of securities prices, interest rates, currency exchange rates and

other economic factors. Accordingly, under normal market conditions, the Fund will limit its exposure to stock index futures to 5% of the value of the portfolio.

As with any mutual fund, it is possible to lose money on an investment in the Fund. An investment in the Fund is not a deposit of any bank and is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, any other government agency, or The Northern Trust Company, its affiliates, subsidiaries or any other bank.

## FUND PERFORMANCE

The bar chart and table below show the performance and returns of the Fund's Shares Class. Effective July 31, 2020, Class K shares and Class I shares replaced the Shares Class. Prior to July 31, 2020, there were no Class K shares or Class I shares outstanding for the Fund.

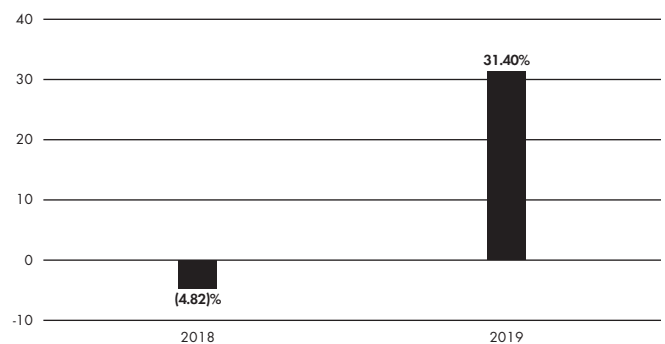
The bar chart and table that follow provide an indication of the risks of investing in the Fund by showing: (A) changes in the performance of the Fund's Shares Class from year to year and (B) how the average annual total returns of the Fund's Shares Class compare to those of a broad-based securities market index.

The performance of the Shares Class has not been adjusted to reflect the expenses applicable to Class K shares or Class I shares since the share classes have different expense ratios than the expense ratio of the Shares Class. Excluding the effect of any fee waivers or reimbursements, the performance of Class K shares and Class I shares would have annual returns substantially similar to those of the Shares Class because the classes invest in the same portfolio of securities. Returns would only differ to the extent of the differences in expenses between the classes. In addition to the Return Before Taxes, Return After Taxes is shown for the Fund's Shares Class to illustrate the effect of federal taxes on Fund returns.

The Fund's past performance, before and after taxes, is not necessarily an indication of how the Fund will perform in the future.

Updated performance information for the Fund is available and may be obtained on the Fund's website at [northerntrust.com/funds](http://northerntrust.com/funds) or by calling 800-595-9111.

### CALENDAR YEAR TOTAL RETURN (SHARES CLASS)\*



\* Year to date total return for the six months ended June 30, 2020 is (1.16)%. For the periods shown in the bar chart above, the highest quarterly return was 13.90% in the first quarter of 2019, and the lowest quarterly return was (14.66)% in the fourth quarter of 2018.

**AVERAGE ANNUAL TOTAL RETURN**  
(For the periods ended December 31, 2019)

	Inception Date	1-Year	Since Inception
Shares Class	10/2/17		
Returns before taxes		31.40%	13.29%
Returns after taxes on distributions		30.86%	12.64%
Returns after taxes on distributions and sale of Fund shares		18.92%	10.11%
Russell 1000 Index (reflects no deduction for fees, expenses, or taxes)		31.43%	13.47%

Returns in the table above are shown for the Shares Class. For periods after July 31, 2020, returns for Class K shares and Class I shares will be shown. After-tax returns for Class K shares and Class I shares will vary. After-tax returns are calculated using the historical highest individual federal marginal income tax rates and do not reflect the impact of state and local taxes. Actual after-tax returns depend on an investor's tax situation and may differ from those shown. After-tax returns shown are not relevant to investors who hold their shares through tax-deferred arrangements, such as 401(k) plans or individual retirement accounts.

In calculating the federal income taxes due on redemptions, capital gains taxes resulting from redemptions are subtracted from the redemption proceeds and the tax benefits from capital losses resulting from the redemptions are added to the redemption proceeds.

## MANAGEMENT

**INVESTMENT ADVISER AND PORTFOLIO MANAGERS.** NTI, an indirect subsidiary of Northern Trust Corporation, serves as the investment adviser of the U.S. Quality ESG Fund. Jeffrey D. Sampson, CFA and Peter M. Zymali, CFP®, each a Senior Vice President of NTI, have been managers of the Fund since inception. The Northern Trust Company, an affiliate of NTI, serves as transfer agent, custodian and sub-administrator to the Fund.

## PURCHASE AND SALE OF FUND SHARES

You may purchase Class I shares of the Fund through an authorized intermediary that has entered into a service agreement and receives a service fee.

You may purchase Class K shares of the Fund by opening an account directly with Northern Funds (the "Trust") with a minimum initial investment of \$2,500 in the Fund (\$500 for an IRA; \$250 under the Automatic Investment Plan; and \$500 for employees of Northern Trust and its affiliates). The minimum subsequent investment is \$50 for Class K shares (except for reinvestments of distributions for which there is no minimum). The Fund reserves the right to waive these minimums. You may also purchase Class K shares of the Fund through your account at Northern Trust (or an affiliate) or an authorized intermediary that does not receive a service fee.

On any business day, you may sell (redeem) or exchange shares through your account by contacting your Northern Trust account representative or authorized intermediary. If you purchase shares directly from the Trust, you may sell (redeem) or exchange your shares in one of the following ways:

- By Mail – Send a written request to: Northern Funds, P.O. Box 75986, Chicago, Illinois 60675-5986.

- By Telephone – Authorize the telephone privilege on your New Account Application. Call 800-595-9111 to use the telephone privilege.
- By Wire – Authorize wire redemptions on your New Account Application and have proceeds sent by federal wire transfer to a previously designated bank account (the minimum redemption amount by this method is \$250). You will be charged \$15 for each wire redemption unless the designated bank account is maintained at Northern Trust or an affiliated bank. Call 800-595-9111 for instructions.
- By Systematic Withdrawal – If you own Class I shares or Class K shares of the Fund with a minimum value of \$10,000, you may elect to have a fixed sum redeemed at regular intervals and distributed in cash or reinvested in the same share class of one or more other funds of the Trust that offers that share class. Call 800-595-9111 for an application form and additional information. The minimum amount is \$250 per withdrawal.
- By Exchange – Complete the Exchange Privilege section of your New Account Application to exchange Class K shares of the Fund for the Class K shares or Shares Class shares of another fund in the Trust. Class K shares being exchanged must have a value of at least \$1,000 (\$2,500 if a new account is being established by the exchange, \$500 if the new account is an IRA). Call 800-595-9111 for more information.

- By Internet – You may initiate transactions between Northern Trust banking and Fund accounts by using Northern Trust Private Passport. For details and to sign up for this service, go to [northerntrust.com/funds](http://northerntrust.com/funds) or contact your Relationship Manager.

## TAX INFORMATION

The Fund's distributions are generally taxable to you as ordinary income, qualified dividend income, capital gains, or a combination of the three, unless you are investing through a tax-exempt or tax-deferred arrangement, such as a 401(k) plan or an individual retirement account. Distributions may be taxable upon withdrawal from tax-deferred accounts.

## PAYMENTS TO BROKERS-DEALERS AND OTHER FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

If you purchase the Fund through a broker-dealer or other financial intermediary (such as a bank), the Fund and its related companies may pay the intermediary for the sale of Fund shares and related services. These payments may create a conflict of interest by influencing the broker-dealer or other intermediary and your salesperson to recommend the Fund over another investment. Ask your salesperson or visit your financial intermediary's website for more information.