Birch Run Investments

Short Term Fixed Income

March 2021

Holding-Based Statistics

	Short Term Fixed Income	Bloomberg Barclays 1-3yr Gov/Credit
Yield to Maturity	0.87%	0.32%
Effective Duration	1.65 years	1.86 years
Average Credit Quality	BBB	AA

Strategy Statistics

Number of Bonds	124
Trailing 12 Month Turnover	42%
Firm Assets	245.06
Product Assets	33.01

Investment Philosophy

The Short Term Fixed Income strategy is managed to provide a high degree of current income with limited interest rate risk by investing in high quality investment grade corporate bonds and U.S. Government securities. The separate account strategy is actively managed with regards to security selection and yield curve exposure with an objective to generate a total return in excess of the index over a full market cycle.

Portfolio Management Team

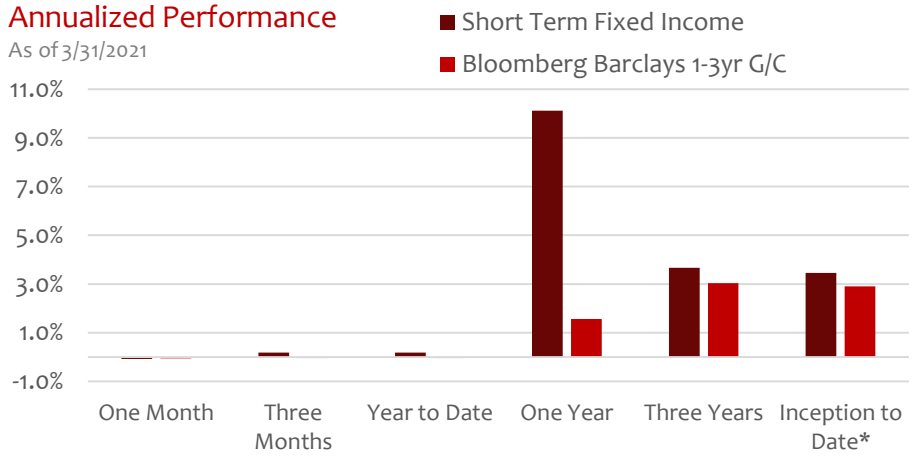
David M. Killian
Joseph D. Shacklock

Inception Date

1/31/2018

Annualized Performance

As of 3/31/2021

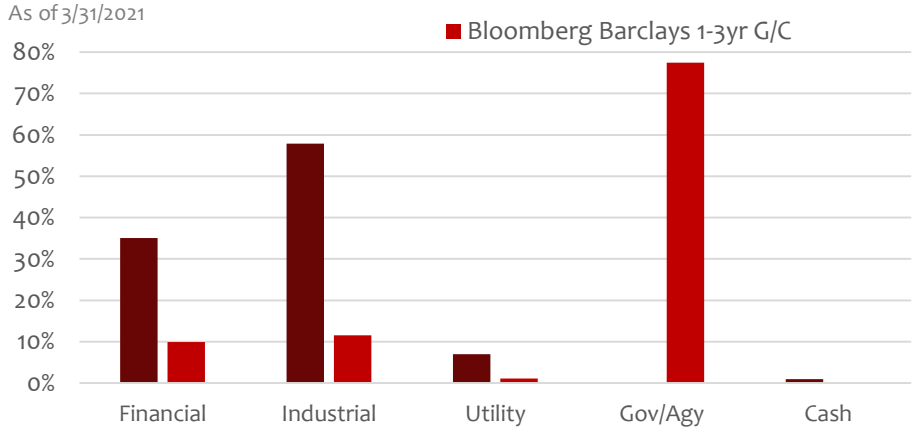


	One Month	Three Months	Year to Date	One Year	Three Years	Inception to Date*
Short Term Fixed Income	-0.08%	0.18%	0.18%	10.11%	3.67%	3.45%
Bloomberg Barclays 1-3yr Gov/Credit	-0.05%	-0.04%	-0.04%	1.57%	3.04%	2.90%

* Inception 1/31/2018

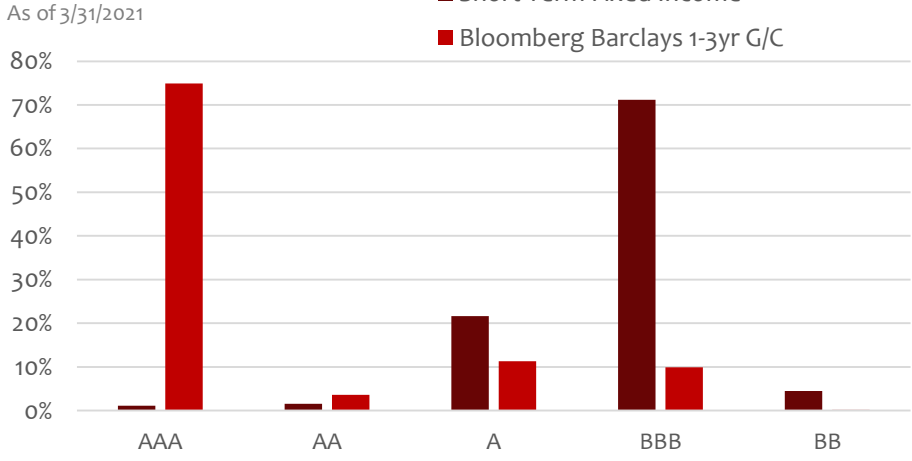
Distribution by Issuer

As of 3/31/2021



Distribution by Quality

As of 3/31/2021



Top 10 Holdings

As of 3/31/2021

PPL Corp 3.40% - 6/1/23	2.08%
Owl Rock Capital Corp 4.00% - 3/30/25	1.90%
JPMorgan Chase & Co 3.875% - 9/10/24	1.67%
Southwest Airlines Co 2.75% - 11/16/22	1.65%
Dr Pepper Snapple 3.13% - 12/15/23	1.62%
Banco Santander 2.706% - 6/27/24	1.60%
Micron Technology 4.64% - 2/6/24	1.59%
McKesson Corp 3.796% - 3/15/24	1.57%
Mosaic Co 4.25% - 11/15/23	1.56%
Goldman Sachs 3.00% - 4/26/22	1.45%

1Q 2021 Portfolio Commentary

More than one year removed from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., the current economic outlook is largely positive. Historic levels of government stimulus, growing consumer confidence, and the general consensus that the pandemic is close to abating has laid the foundation for what will likely be above trend GDP growth for, at a minimum, the balance of 2021. Faster than initially anticipated vaccine rollout and availability is expected to propel consumer spending in the coming quarters as more states lift restrictions and consumers grow more comfortable dining, shopping, and traveling outside of their homes. This anticipated resurgence in both consumer and business spending will be supported by proceeds received from federal stimulus programs as well as increased personal savings accrued during the pandemic. U.S. Treasury yields have responded to the improving economic outlook, moving sharply higher during the quarter reflecting both increased investor confidence in the economic recovery and the associated risks of higher inflation.

The FOMC currently projects annual inflation will reach 2.4% by the end of this year before receding to the central bank's 2% target in 2022. Achieving this elusive 2% inflation objective would be a welcome development by investors, however if inflation were to increase more significantly the Fed may be forced to tighten policy more aggressively than currently planned. The continued steepening of the yield curve is due in part to this uncertain inflationary outlook. The spread, or difference in yield, between the 2-year and 10-year Treasury Notes now stands at 1.58%, an increase of nearly 1.0% from levels seen throughout the summer of 2020. While rates will likely continue to rise modestly in the coming months, we do not expect them to increase as sharply and quickly as they have since the start of the year.

Despite the increased volatility in the U.S. Treasury market, select corporate bond valuations reached all-time highs and the higher yields now available in the sector will likely further add to investor demand. Both high yield and investment grade corporate bonds have performed exceptionally well following the rollout of several Federal Reserve emergency facilities early last year that provided the sector meaningful support. For the twelve months ending March 31, 2021 the Barclays U.S. Corporate Bond Index gained 8.73% while high yield bonds as measured by Barclays U.S. Corporate High Yield index advanced 23.72%, both far outpacing the Barclays U.S. Treasury Index return of -4.43%.

In light of stretched valuations during the quarter, we took the opportunity to realize gains and to increase the portfolio's overall credit quality by reducing exposure to corporate bonds and reinvesting proceeds in U.S. Treasury securities. While the highest quality segments of the corporate bond market have fully retraced the COVID-19 selloff of early 2020, we still find select opportunities in lower rated and more economically sensitive industry groups. As always, we intend to be opportunistic in continuing to realize gains in securities where appropriate while maintaining a high quality and liquid portfolio, well equipped to respond quickly to changing market conditions.

Given our expectation for rising yields, our overall bias continues to be in favor of shorter dated bonds that are less price sensitive to changes in the yield curve. However, given the recent steepening of the curve we have begun to selectively add exposure to longer maturity bonds where the yield differential is increasingly attractive. As yields continue to increase we would expect this repositioning process to continue, which will improve the overall level of portfolio income.

Birch Run Investments

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