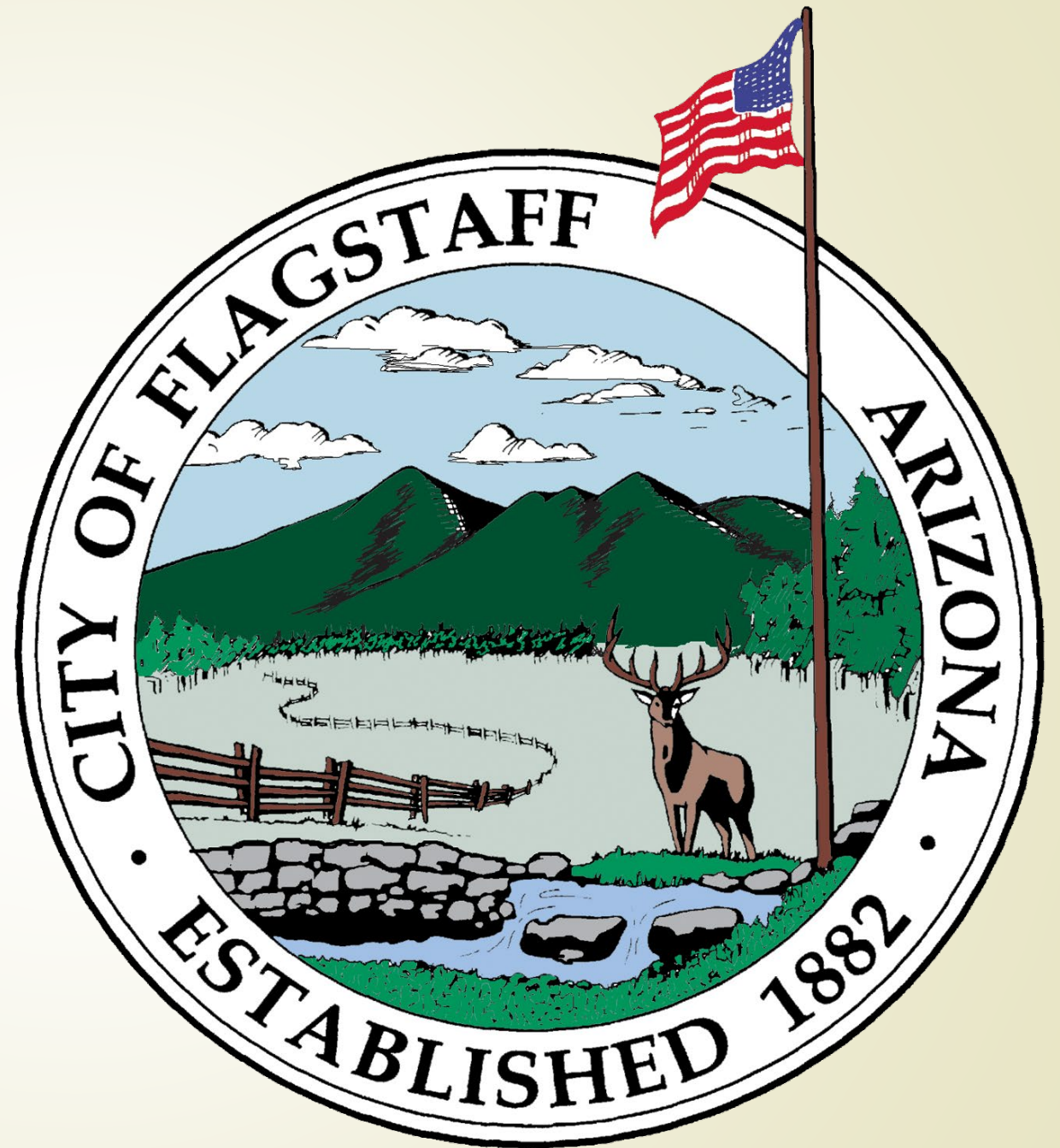


# City of Flagstaff, Arizona

Equitable, Nature-Based Climate  
Resilience Solutions Driven by  
Community & Collaboration



# Climate change impacts in Flagstaff

- ▶ Flooding in August 2021 turned neighborhood roads into raging rivers.
- ▶ Flagstaff United School District evacuated schools as they rapidly filled with water.
- ▶ Community members worked together to protect homes from severe flooding.



# W.F Killip Elementary School Shut Down

- ▶ The students were displaced for the 2021-2022 school year
- ▶ “It looked like the Grand Canyon rapids running down the street”
- ▶ “It was pretty traumatic,” said Gayle Gratop, whose offices are across the street from Killip Elementary.



# Green School Yards

- Flagstaff was selected to be a member of the Green School Yards (GSY) Program
- Collaboration between the City of Flagstaff, Flagstaff United School District, Terra Birds, and the University of Arizona Extension Program



Children & Nature Network



Cooperative Extension

## Killip Pollinator Garden Planting Day (Summer 2022)



Killip Garden (Fall 2018)



Killip Garden (Fall 2023)



# Green School Yards

- ▶ W.F Killip Elementary School was selected as the first green school yard location in Flagstaff for:
  - ▶ Location within a community heavily impacted by climate change
  - ▶ Diverse neighborhood and students
  - ▶ The school's commitment to serving indigenous community members
  - ▶ Long history of growing food for the neighborhood and the need to maintain the school garden in the rebuild
- ▶ Educate and inspire youth about environmental stewardship through outdoor, nature-based learning
- ▶ **Equitable distribution of community driven climate resilience projects**



# Accomplishments

- ▶ Stormwater Infrastructure & Urban Forest Habitat



- ▶ School Garden Club & Junior Master Gardener Program



# Accomplishments

- ▶ Youth Therapeutic Horticulture Wellness Program



- ▶ Pollinator Garden



# Accomplishments

- Composting System & full circle composting with Restoration Soils



- Raised Garden Beds & Terra Birds youth education





# Life Changing Educational Experiences

► "I kept calling the soil dirt and my daughter kept saying, 'it's not dirt, it's soil, mom.'"

- Killip student parent

► "I learned how to be kind to plants and to people"

- Killip student

► "I get so excited about gardening club; I could just scream!"

- Killip student





# Life Changing Educational Experiences

- ▶ 97% of the Youth Therapeutic Horticulture Wellness Program sessions improved mood for students
- ▶ Almost 500 students and 120 teachers were engaged with land stewardship and ecological literacy programs
- ▶ Killip students learned through GSY programming how to:
  - ▶ Take responsibility for living things
  - ▶ Make healthy food choices
  - ▶ Manage stress
  - ▶ Be resilient
  - ▶ Work cooperatively
  - ▶ Make scientific observations
  - ▶ Share with each other
  - ▶ Give to others

# Learning Together

➤ The 2021 cohort of cities, including Flagstaff, worked on their Green School Yard Projects together

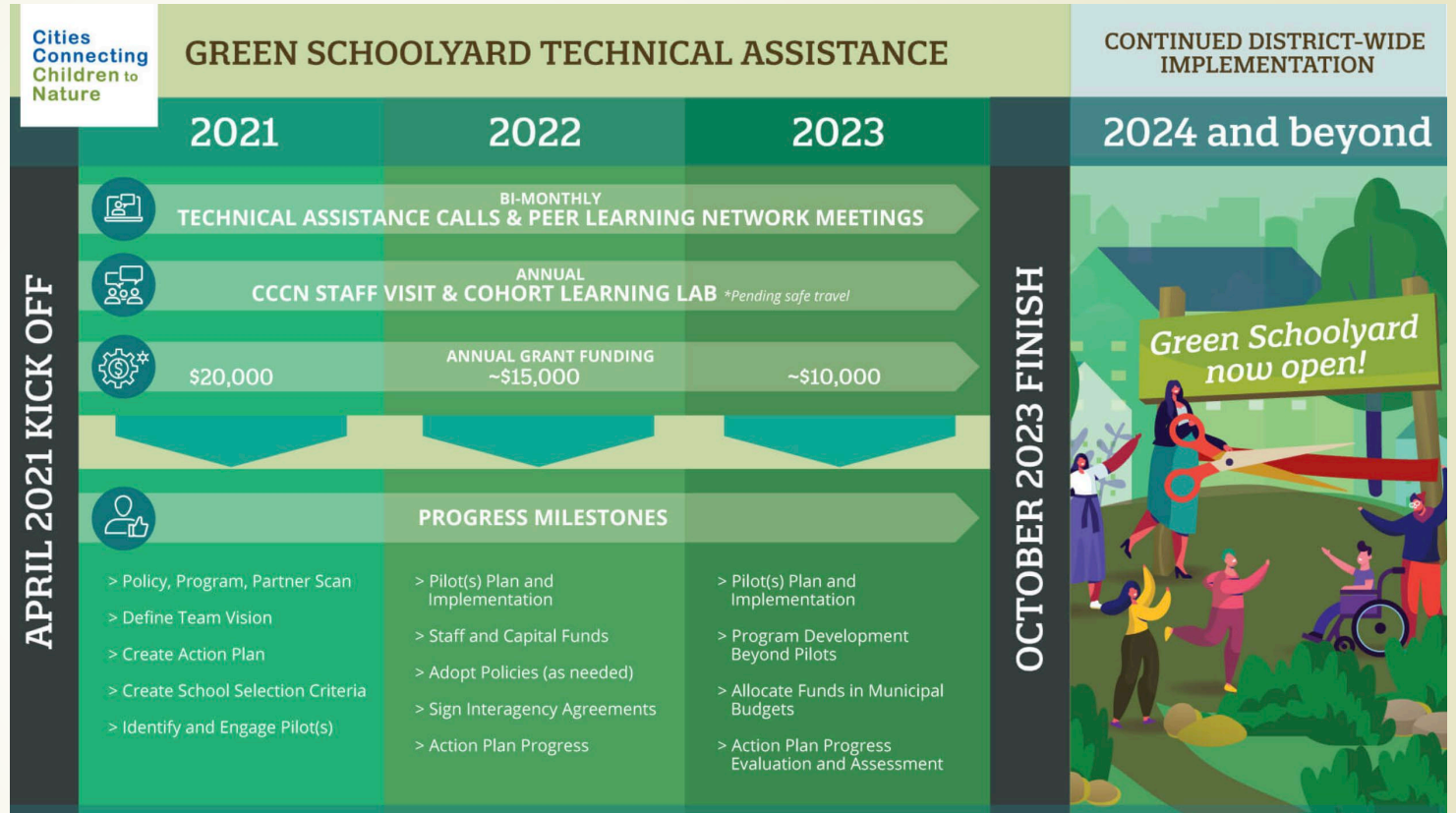
➤ This collaborative learning system was especially helpful for smaller cities like Flagstaff

- How to implement GSY with smaller capacity
- Showed Flagstaff's GSY team what was possible!
- Provided inspiration for projects



# Green School Yards Partner Support

- ▶ Technical assistance grant provided funding for programming and new infrastructure
- ▶ Guidance from CNN staff supported project implementation
- ▶ Provided resources for pursuing additional funding opportunities





# Opportunities for Growth



## ► Challenges

- Long-term capacity to sustain programs
  - Low staff capacity both in small cities and small non-profits
- Long-term funding to pay for educational programming in the gardens
- Future climatic challenges
  - Drought
  - Fire
  - Flooding

## ► Federal support is critical and makes a HUGE difference!

- Continued support for Green School Yards and similar programs
  - Make projects like this possible for other cities and school districts
- Federal grants supporting nature-based solutions that trickle down from states to municipalities and non-profits make significant differences



## **Future Aspirations for Nature-Based Solutions in Flagstaff**

*Work to improve green school yard infrastructure at Killip Elementary School continues thanks to the work of a dedicated team of community organizations.*

# Thank You

Mayor Becky Daggett  
City of Flagstaff, AZ

