

Plant Science Research Greenhouse (PSRG) Facility

PSRG Committee Meeting Minutes

October 1st, 2026, 11:00 am

Present: Kang Xia, (AgBio Research), Marianna Szucs (ENT), Linda Hanson (USDA), Jeremy Johnson (FOR), Roberto Lopez (HRT), Mary Hausbeck (PSM), David Lowry (PLB, PRI), Eric Olson (PSM), Erik Runkle (HRT) (Co-Chair), Berkley Walker (PLB, PRL) (Co-Chair), Cody Keilen (Controlled Environment Facility)

Absent: Polly Hsu (BMB)

Erik Runkle called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

A summary of the discussion about each agenda item is included below:

Greenhouse updates

Power/steam outage

Cody reported the losses to the greenhouses were minor during the campus wide power and steam outage on September 19th. Operations are back to normal. As requested, he will send Kang a list of damaged equipment.

Consolidation of growth chamber/greenhouse tasks (WPS, service requests)

Cody gave an update on the consolidation of management of the greenhouses and growth chambers. Management of these facilities has been combined and is now called the MSU Plant Science Controlled Environment Facility. Progress has been made to have one system/method for WPS training, pest management, work request orders (ticketing), and student hiring. Erik would like to be included in updates/policies that are related to the phytotron at PESB to ensure coordination with the greenhouses.

Personnel updates (reminder down one position)

The committee expressed strong support to get a staff position filled so workload can be handled.

Greenhouse renovations

Funding status and timeline

Kang reported the greenhouses are receiving 32 million dollars for renovations, half of which is coming from a USDA Research Facilities grant, the other half from the University. The timeline for completion is 3 years, and Kang stressed the importance of the Greenhouse User Committee to help lead the effort.

Number/size of sections per range

Erik presented a rendering of the new greenhouse ranges and asked the committee for input on the range layouts, with the overall footprint still being the same as those recently built. A discussion was started about the size of the individual ranges. The new ranges have 9 or 5 compartments per range but having larger compartment ranges could be beneficial. Berkley suggested user input to further guide section sizes, and the committee agreed.

Suggested modifications

Erik and Eric brought up the possibility of finding space for storage material. Roberto brought up getting different benches as some of the plastic ones are falling apart. Roberto brought up the size of the hallways in the new greenhouses and if it's possible to create smaller ones to save money or increase greenhouse space. Erik mentioned a concern over multiple cycles of value engineering in the last round of renovations that forced many cutbacks to the original plan. David asked if the same contractors will be used and if some of the issues that were present during Phase 1, such as the slope in a few of the greenhouse floors, would be corrected to ensure proper drainage.

Specialized features for consideration (wish list)

Erik talked about the Phase 2 greenhouses with the tentative plan to have similar environmental control features as the recently built ranges and asked for input on other additional features that would be of general use to users. Marianna expressed interest in having ranges with humidification and shading between ranges. Erik brought up the possibility of diffused glass on end compartments. Berkley mentioned having the fertilizer water from Phase 1 extended into the new greenhouses in Phase 2. Linda brought up the need to make sure the greenhouses are not walk through. These later two concerns were already in the plans.

Linda mentioned the USDA has allocated \$3 million to upgrade greenhouse range 5, however there has been no progress.

Kang wants to be notified when the co-chairs have input on the greenhouse design so that a meeting with the contractors can be established.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.