



Common Sense Conservation
LAND LEGACY

Press Release

Land Legacy

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Land Legacy sues to Protect Private Property Rights from Sand Springs Data Center

Land Legacy filed a lawsuit in Osage County district court today, March 23rd 2026 against developer Alan Ringle, his family members, and related business entities for violating a conservation easement held by Land Legacy. The conservation easement prohibits industrial development on land which is the proposed site for a hyperscale data center to be used by tech giant Google Inc. near Sand Springs, Oklahoma.

Land Legacy, a Tulsa-based non-profit land trust, accepted the easement from the Ringle family in 2013. The contract terms require Land Legacy to protect the land from industrial development and to enforce the easement which requires that the land be preserved in its natural open space used only for traditional farming and ranching. The agreement with Land Legacy enabled the Ringle family to claim a \$3,800,000 tax deduction.

Michael Patton, Executive Director of Land Legacy explains *"The Ringles are breaking their promises, and they tried to hide the easement from Sand Springs community during the annexation and rezoning proceedings."* Mr. Patton is concerned that the Ringle's, their partners, and representatives hid and misrepresented their plans to violate the easement.

Attorney for Land Legacy Harlan Hentges states *"this lawsuit is about protecting private property rights. Land Legacy has the right and responsibility under the law to prohibit this industrial development. Those private property rights can't be ignored or taken away by the Ringles, the city, and certainly not by Google."*

The Ringles and their undisclosed partners went forward with their annexation and rezoning request at the City of Sand Springs without notifying Land Legacy and in the process caused the City of Sand Springs to act unlawfully in several respects. Due to those irregularities, Land Legacy has joined two pending lawsuits in Tulsa County brought against the Sand Springs city council by Sand Springs citizens and the Protect Sand Springs Alliance, Inc. "We are asking the Court to rule that the annexation and rezoning are null and void" said Kyle Schmidt with Protect Sand Springs. Mr. Schmidt stated, *"We welcome Land Legacy's decision to join us in insisting that our elected city officials follow the law, and respect private property rights. While our case was already strong on its own merits, their involvement underscores that every local citizen and business can and should, if they are able, hold elected city officials accountable if they fail to protect Sand Springs citizens and landowners from injustice, abusive business practices, dishonesty and unlawful overreach."*

The suit was filed on Monday in Osage County as case number _____.

Questions and interviews can be scheduled with Michael Patton at the above contact information.

Land Legacy lawsuit against Ringle Development timeline

In December of 2013, the Ringle Family signed a Deed of Conservation Easement with Land Legacy. Land Legacy is a Land-Trust based in Tulsa with over 150 easements in Oklahoma including 16 in Osage County. All four members of the Ringle family signed the notarized document.

The easement language assures that the property will be retained forever predominately in its natural, scenic and open space and prohibits any development in the easement except for those that involve traditional ranching or agricultural use.

The four members of the Ringle family got to claim tax deductions totaling \$3.822 million.

On May 5th 2025, without notifying Land Legacy, the Ringles petitioned the City of Sand Springs to annex the land for development. They failed to mention their legally binding agreement with Land Legacy to not build on property protected by the Easement. This failure was compounded by the elected and appointed officials and the staff of the City of Sand Springs who failed to do a simple title search to find the easement. The City approved annexation without Land Legacy knowledge or approval.

On October 3rd 2025, Ringle Development LLC applied to rezone the property. The development team once again failed to do a simple title search, and the Ringles representative falsely stated there were no restrictions on the land. The City of Springs held a rezoning hearing at the end of 2025. Again, Land Legacy was not notified of the application or the hearing.

After Land Legacy learned of the rezoning application, its Executive Director, Michael Patton, attended a public meeting on January 20th, 2026, and alerted the city officials, members of the Ringle family, and the development team, including a Google official, about the easement. At the planning commission meeting the following Tuesday January 27th 2026 Land Legacy Executive Director, Michael Patton spoke at the public meeting about the easement and urged the commission to postpone their vote until the matter could be investigated. The planning commissioners claimed they had not been informed about the easement, but, at the request of the Ringles' attorney, they proceeded to a vote and recommend the rezoning to the City Council.

The following Thursday, January 29th 2026 the attorney representing the Ringles claimed in a letter to the City that Ringles' failure to disclose the existence of the easement was a mistake because a title examination had not yet been conducted. This excuse is not credible because all four members of the Ringle family personally signed easement and claimed large tax deductions. Also, Land Legacy conducted an onsite inspection of the easement every other year since 2013.

The City Council meeting on the matter happened on the following Tuesday February 3rd 2026. Michael Patton once again spoke about the restrictions and passed out copies from Osage County courthouse proving the existence of the easement. The city council then voted to rezone the property with one councilor opposing it. Council member Beau Wilson believed that they needed to take more time to understand the issue Mr. Patton had raised.

Monday March 23rd, 2026, Land Legacy filed a lawsuit against Ringle Development and the Ringle family for violation of the conservation easement. The same day Land Legacy joined two pending lawsuits by the Protect Sand Springs Alliance against the City of Sand Springs challenging the legality of annexation and rezoning.