MYNU

From Oilfields to Earthworms:

THE TWO FOUNDERS DRIVING A CARBON-NEGATIVE FUTURE

It began with a conversation.

Not in a lab. Not on a stage. But across time zones, between two men, one a petroleum engineer turned purpose-driven entrepreneur, the other a pioneering systems thinker who had spent half a century fixing inefficiencies in global energy. What emerged wasn't just a business idea. It was the seed of Myno Carbon, a company built to turn carbon into a solution, not a side effect.

But to understand where Myno is going, you have to know where its founders have been.

Two Journeys, one vision

At first glance, Thor Kallestad and Tom Casten couldn't be more different.

Thor, born in Minnesota and raised on the edge of rocket launches in Cocoa Beach, Florida, came of age with Boy Scouts and ski slopes, then built his career inside the high-pressure world of oil and gas. Tom, raised in a small farming town in Colorado, started harvesting earthworms at age 15 and went on to reshape how cities and industries use energy.

Yet both men share something rare: a lifelong impulse to solve real-world problems with systems-level thinking. And both reject the idea that one must choose between purpose and profit.

Their partnership, one forged across generations, has become the engine behind Myno Carbon.

MYNO

MEET THE FOUNDERS

Thor Kallestad: From oilfields to climate mission

Thor's path began in the friction between nature and industry.

As a kid, he watched rockets lift off from Cape Canaveral and his father manufacture bright yellow oil booms to contain marine spills. That early exposure to environmental engineering stuck with him. Later, as an Eagle Scout and environmental studies student at UC Santa Barbara, Thor developed a deep respect for ecosystems and a hunger for action. He didn't want to study problems. He wanted to spend his life addressing those problems.

After a brief foray into remediation work in Alaska, Thor joined Schlumberger. He spent nearly two decades in the oil and gas industry, learning to scale operations, lead teams, and execute under pressure.

He earned a petroleum engineering degree in Scotland, then an MBA from Berkeley. By the time he met his wife, Waverly, a PhD chemist, they were both asking more profound questions: "What's next? What matters now?"

Thor went on to launch and exit two startups, but something was still missing. Around the time of COVID, he reconnected with Tom Casten, a speaker he remembered from business school. That call would change everything.

MYNO

MEET THE FOUNDERS

Tom Casten: A systems mindset forged by friction

Tom's story starts in Windsor, Colorado, a town of 1,500. Born in the middle of World War II, he learned grit early. Also an Eagle Scout, at 15, Tom funded a trip to the Boy Scout Jamboree by organizing his friends to harvest and sell 14,000 earthworms. "It wasn't just resourceful," he laughs. "It was entrepreneurial."

But it was his mother who taught him his deepest values. Though she didn't speak a word of French, she often repeated the phrase noblesse oblige, meaning in her words that "to whom much is given, much will be required. "That stuck with me," Tom says. "Strive to use your talents to create a better world."

MEET THE FOUNDERS

Tom Casten: A systems mindset forged by friction

In 1974, after the Marine Corps, an MBA, and an entrepreneurial stint in Ireland, Tom joined Cummins Engine Company. His initial assignment was to identify the top global threats facing the business over the rest of the century. The following year's analysis determined that global warming—climate change —would top the world's problem list. He proposed a radical solution: do two jobs with one fire. Reduce costs and environmental impact of energy production by cogenerating heat and power – electricity and thermal energy. Cummins backed the idea. Tom launched a new division: Cummins Cogeneration Company.

That decision would launch a career spent re-engineering the built environment.

Over the next 45 years, Tom founded and led Trigen Energy, Primary Energy, and Recycled Energy Development, building combined heat and power plants to supply electricity and thermal energy across North America. His companies delivered over $2 billion in clean infrastructure. His white papers, book (Turning Off the Heat), board roles, and policy testimony helped shift public and private energy strategy.

But his mission was never just technical. It was moral.

The spark that became Myno

It was Thor who reached out first. He remembered Tom's Berkeley lecture and called him out of the blue. Thor had been exploring climate solutions post-oilfield and had stumbled across biochar - a porous carbon material made from pyrolyzed biomass. He was intrigued by its ability to sequester carbon, remediate contaminated soil, and enhance microbial activity.

Tom, ever the systems thinker and a lifelong organic gardener, already used biochar in his compost. "I knew it worked," he said. "The question was, could it scale?"

The two began comparing notes. They talked about residual biomass, including wood waste, ag byproducts, food scraps, etc, and the potential for multi-gigaton greenhouse gas reduction by converting otherwise wasted biomass into clean energy and stored carbon.

They talked about the slow pace of policy and the fast pace of climate change.

They spoke about legacy.

They decided to build something together.

MYNO

From conversation to company

They named it Myno, applying Thor's daughter's first babble words, "My no broccocli" into Myno Carbon. Eliminating carbon dioxide was personal. And that intimacy shaped the company's ethos: mission-driven, low ego, high trust.

The early plan was simple: build scalable facilities that turned waste biomass into biochar and renewable energy. But they hit a speed bump: offtake. They could produce biochar. Selling it, however, proved harder.

Rather than give up, they pursued a path for greatest impact.

With Waverly's background in analytical chemistry, the team began developing contaminant-specific biochar blends. Instead of producing raw biochar, they began engineering biochars to capture pollutants, including PFAS, petroleum, metals, and solvents, while improving crop yields and reducing global warming.

Today, Myno Carbon develops liquid and solid biochar products, tested in third-party labs and fine-tuned by data, for use in farming, compost enhancement, soil stabilization, remediation, mine site reclamation, and more. Their products don't just store carbon. They unlock microbial life. Improve yields. Clean up pollution. Reduce odors. Restore land. It's not a commodity business. It's a precision solution platform.

MYNO

A meeting of minds and missions

Thor brings speed, urgency, and deep operational know-how from the oil and gas industry. Tom brings scale logic, policy strategy, and the long view from decades in building energy infrastructure. Their partnership rests on mutual respect. “We don’t make major decisions unless we both agree,” Tom says. “But Thor makes all of the day-to-day decisions and is Myno’s leader.”

Thor, for his part, sees leadership not as command-and-control but as cultural clarity. “What holds a company together in hard times isn’t strategy or even funding. It’s culture,” he says. “Small-c culture. The stuff people live every day.” That culture now runs through every part of Myno: no posturing, no politics, just shared conviction.

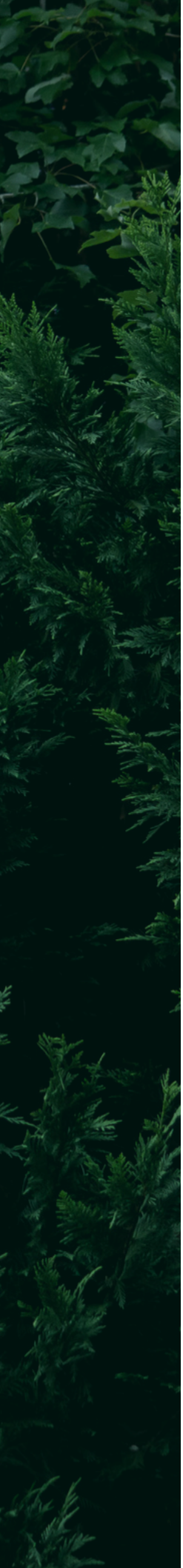
Why biochar, why now

For both men, Myno isn't about riding a trend. It's about solving a convergence of crises: waste, contamination, emissions, and ecological degradation.

Globally, humanity annually harvests more biomass than nature grows. Much of the harvest ends up in landfills or rotting piles, releasing methane or leaching toxins. Myno's model to convert this waste into clean energy and tailored biochar that stores carbon and captures other environmental pollutants is a circular solution – it sequesters carbon and creates value at the same time.

Myno's designs carbon removal facilities (CRFs) to be modular, profitable, and replicable. At scale, a single CRF can remove 375,000 metric tons of CO_2 annually and generate 500,000 MMBTU of clean energy.

But Myno's founders are focused on global impact. "If we can make this work in Washington or Alberta or Texas," Thor says, "we (and others) can do it anywhere."



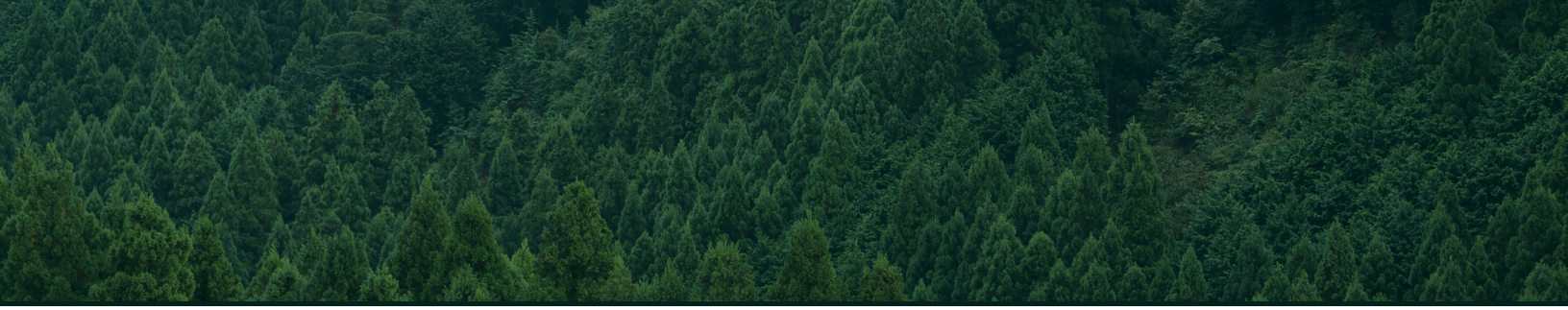
The road ahead: Proof, not hype

Neither founder is particularly interested in the hype cycle of climate tech. They've seen trends come and go. What they want is proof.

That explains Myno's deep focus on lab validation, third-party field trials, and empirical performance data. "We don't sell dreams," Thor says. "We sell results."

That pragmatism is winning over companies required to reduce their environmental impact, oil and gas companies, remediation contractors, and composters who need solutions that actually work in the field, not just on paper.

At the same time, Myno is engaged with regulators, academics, and policy coalitions to establish biochar as a certified Best Management Practice (BMP) for remediation, land restoration, and even mine reclamation.



Legacy in the making

For Tom, now in his 80s, Myno is a continuation of a life's work. "I can't run companies anymore," he says, "but I can help shape the ones that matter." He and his wife now live on a property where they're restoring prairie and enriching soil with Myno biochar. *"I'll never retire," he says. "Not while there's work left to do."*

For Thor, it's about building a future his children will inherit. A future that doesn't just count but also captures carbon, a future where climate tech isn't abstract, but grounded in science, soil, and systems that work.

Their advice to others is simple:

Thor

"Start with a mission bigger than yourself. The rest is logistics."

Tom

"Stay curious. Be humble. And never let someone else control your mission."

Epilogue: Two Men, One Message

Myno Carbon isn't a Silicon Valley darling or a government lab spinout. It's something rarer: a company built by two leaders who have seen the system from the inside—and decided to develop a new model.

An oilfield engineer and a cogeneration cowboy. One from Cocoa Beach. One from Colorado farm fields. Both have dirt under their nails, data in their DNA, and a passionate desire to reduce global warming while rewarding investors.

Not surprisingly, Myno's mission is

"to reduce global warming while rewarding investors".

MYNO