



A photo of Sybille Haeussler, right, mentoring BVRC volunteer Courtney Berdan took second place in a photo contest for volunteers.

Alana Clason photo

Volunteer photo snags second place

By Percy N. Hébert
Smithers/Interior News

It was a way of recognizing the many volunteers that help her, a way of saying thank you.

Sybille Haeussler, a forest ecologist working with the Bulkley Valley Research Centre, submitted a photo of a volunteer, Courtney Berdan, helping her in the field to the Administrators of Volunteer Resources British Columbia (AVRBC) photo contest.

The photo contest was established to recognize volunteer mentors. To be eligible, photos had to depict mentors in action, training or inspiring volunteers.

"I thought the photo was really fitting," Haeussler said of the photo of herself showing Berdan how to plant whitebark pine seedlings at her research site.

"I thought the photo encapsulated mentorship of a volunteer and an appreciation for nature."

The photo, from a tree-planting site where the Gosnell wildfire occurred in 2010, was taken by University of Northern British Columbia PhD student Alana Clason.

"I think it's just great that Sybille took the initiative to submit the photo," Clason said.

"It's a positive news story that should get out.

"We're doing this and involving so many people in the community."

The second-place finish came with \$75 in prize money. Haeussler and Clason forewent treating themselves to a nice supper with the money, in favour of adding books on the whitebark pine to the BVRC library.

In awarding second prize, the judges said the photo was, "Beautifully composed, using tree branches as a framing device, shows a leader training a volunteer while they both share their passion around preserving nature."

"We smile a lot when we do this work because it's so much fun," Clason said.