

## NH Success Story: Working Buffers



*Above: Sam Trombly and NRCS Hillsboro County Soil Conservationist Heather Foley, stand proudly next to New Hampshire's first "working riparian buffer".*

**Good for the River and Good for Business....**Heavy rains have dangerously pushed the Souhegan River over its banks too many times for comfort in the last few years. The family farm called NRCS to consult on how to slow the eroding corn land and help protect their farm from future floods. It was clear they wanted to make a change but weren't sure they could afford it. Most of NH is steep rocky land, so prime agricultural soils on floodplains are a precious commodity and every inch of it counts toward the bottom line. The working buffer is a concept which plants native fruit crops such as high bush blueberries, raspberries and blackberries, sugar maples and Christmas tress which don't require manure or fertilizers, are great for wildlife, hold the soil in place in the non-growing season as opposed to corn, and best of yet, can be harvested to make money. Along this beautiful stretch of the Souhegan River many locals walk the banks of the river on a river walk, now within a few years time, a pick-your own operation will be funded by donations from those who pick some fruit, and a lot of it may go to the birds.

NRCS hopes this practice will become more popular with farmers especially as part of the Connecticut River Initiative, (also known as the Long Island Sound Initiative), also provides dollars to landowners in the CT river watershed in 4 states. NRCS in cooperation with the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Refuge and several other partners NRCS is reaching out to these landowners to improve wildlife habitat, reduce erosion on crop and forest land and most of all improve water quality. Landowners interested in Working buffers, Cover Crops, Controlling Invasive Plants, and improving wildlife habitat or streams should work with their local county NRCS office to submit an application by Dec 3.