

Towns' Open Space Plans Get \$4.

By BETH HAMILTON AND KIM MOY
 Courant Staff Writers

The state Department of Environmental Protection awarded \$4.5 million in open space grants to 20 municipalities Tuesday. The grants will pay for the purchase of 985 acres in diverse natural landscapes, including tidal marshes, major wetlands, farmsteads, woodlands, greenways, scenic vistas and parks.

The majority of parcels proposed for purchase are adjacent to property already bought for open space preservation, state officials said. This is the fourth round of grants awarded by the DEP since the inception of the state's Open Space Acquisi-

CONNECTICUT

tion Program in 1989. In the first three rounds of grants awarded in 1989 and last February — the DEP gave out approximately \$16 million for 71 projects totaling 6,089 acres.

The total of 7,000 acres will be a lasting legacy for future residents, land that will remain undeveloped and available for wildlife habitat and for passive and active recreation. Lt. Gov. M. Jodi Reil said at a ceremony in Southington.

The state's goal, established by the legislature in 1986, is to preserve 21 percent of Connecticut's land as open space by 2023 — a total of 673,210 acres.

Ten percent of the land is to be state owned, with the remaining 11 percent owned by municipalities, private nonprofit con-

servations organizations and utilities.

To qualify for a grant, municipalities' open space, enhancement or other projects must be a long-term plan of a community or region.

The following communities will receive grants Tuesday:

- Middletown — \$403,000 for 13 the town's primary recreational areas, Cranford Park.
- Essex — \$225,000 for 22 acres in the Falls River area, which is part of the Metacombet River/Nature Preserve, which abuts the city's 13-acre sewage treatment plant and will help the city reach the Swan Farm.

Million Boost From State

moving the plant and expanding the park.

Lyme — \$400,000 for 69 acres on the Kimball property. The property is surrounded by open space and will help protect Selden Creek Preserve.

Southington — \$31,500 for 34 acres of woodlands, open fields, freshwater pond and wetlands known as the Curtiss property.

Tolland — \$247,500 for 46 acres bordering the town's primary recreational areas, Cranford Park.

Essex — \$225,000 for 22 acres in the Falls River area, which is part of the Metacombet River/Nature Preserve, which abuts the city's 13-acre sewage treatment plant and will help the city reach the Swan Farm.

Wallingford — \$151,000 for 10 acres of water supply land adjacent to and upstream of the McKenzie Reservoir.

Manchester — \$125,000 for 11 acres of some of the last remaining riverfront land not open to public access and trail development along the Hockanum River.

Berlin — \$107,250 for 55 acres on South Mountain to enlarge Hubbard Park and create an extensive greenway extending from West Peak to Cathole Mountain.

Middletown — \$30,000 for 13 acres known as the Pelkey property. The purchase will help the town protect the Besseck Mountain traprock ridge.

Gulford — \$97,500 for 12 acres along West River and Spencer's Creek.

